



# RACING HOME

Working mothers in the horseracing industry

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## FOREWORD

Women in Racing is now in our 11th year having celebrated our 10-year anniversary in 2019 and we are very proud to be bringing our second piece of academic research to the industry. This research study follows on from our ground-breaking piece of work “Women’s Representation and Diversity in the Horseracing Industry” undertaken by Oxford Brookes’ Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice (CDPRP) in 2017, and builds upon the areas highlighted in their original report around working mothers in our industry.

“Racing Home: Working mothers in the horseracing industry” is the output of a year-long project undertaken by Women in Racing and our partners Simply Racing. Simply Racing has been alongside us from the start and has been fundamental in bringing our vision for the project and research to life. The project was launched in November 2019 at a symposium in London attended by over 65 key industry stakeholders. The event kick-started the conversation around what it feels like to be a working mother in the horseracing industry, to understand the decision-making that takes place and explore the impact of returning to work after maternity leave. A panel of keynote speakers, hosted by Simply Racing, enabled us to begin this conversation with the industry and bring further awareness to how women are impacted by motherhood throughout their careers.

We once again chose to work with the expert team at Oxford Brookes’ Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, who worked alongside the team at Simply Racing to undertake the research across a series of workshops. It is testament to both these teams and the horseracing industry that despite the impacts of COVID-19 we were able to continue with the research, moving the data-gathering workshops to online webinars, and that participants were enthusiastic to be part of the project. We thank everyone for the effort made.

In addition to Simply Racing and the team at Oxford Brookes, this piece of work would not have been possible without funding from our sponsors. We are eternally grateful to The Racing Foundation and Kindred Group, as Women in Racing is a voluntary organisation with income coming purely from membership subscriptions.

The funding from these two organisations has been essential to ensuring the project and the research could be undertaken.

Special mention must go to the following individuals; Dena Merson, Michael Armstrong, Dr. Kate Clayton-Hathway and Dr. Bianca Stumbitz as without them this project and piece of research would not have taken place. The work of these individuals has enabled this significant piece of research to be produced. Our thanks also go to the CDPRP team for their help in reviewing the developed drafts, and in particular Mieke Tyrrell for her ongoing support. It is the first of its kind in the horseracing industry and indeed many other sports. Our aim is that it allows our industry to move forward and take steps that will positively impact the day-to-day lives of women that are so important to its future.

Women in Racing will continue to be accountable for the outcomes of this research but without the input and contribution of all sectors of the sport we will not be able to make the positive impacts that we believe can be made. It is with this in mind that we have created the ‘Solutions and Next Steps’ section of the report, where we indicate actions that can be taken and suggest organisations within the industry who we can partner with to bring ideas to fruition. We are passionate about implementing the suggested solutions rather than simply pointing out areas of concern and we are greatly looking forward to working with all participants and organisations across the industry to bring these solutions to life.



**Tallulah Lewis**  
Chair, Women in Racing



***Racing is part of who I am. I feel blessed that I can get up every day and do something that I love and I hope that we can make it easier for women to do that.***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Racing Home project began with a symposium on 18th November 2019, examining what it feels like to be a working mother in the horseracing industry, understanding the decision-making that takes place, and exploring the impact of returning to work after maternity leave. The symposium provided a forum for discussion on the decisions working women make, with a panel of experienced keynote speakers sharing invaluable insights with an audience of 60+ participants.

The symposium represented the first of a number of bold steps. The impact of having children is a topic that women who work in the sport often report as one they are reluctant to discuss, as they fear it could adversely affect their career prospects and others' perceptions of them. Building on discussions from the symposium, and on previous work carried out for Women in Racing by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes, this research project was designed to highlight these voices in the industry. It collected experiences of motherhood and parenting 'on the ground', and explored the views of a range of stakeholders.

It is generally recognised that women form an increasing proportion of the horseracing workforce, though this shift has not been widely acknowledged or catered for. Both attitudinal and structural barriers have been causing many women either to leave the industry prematurely, or to decide not to join in the first place. This creates a drain on talent and resources with cost implications, often for employers operating on tight margins.

Maintaining a flow of fresh talent while keeping hold of experienced staff are essential to the ongoing success of the industry and the retention of expertise and organisational memory. The following qualitative study builds on previous work by Oxford Brookes on motherhood in the horseracing industry and explores the ways in which the industry can improve retention of working mothers and parents as one way to achieve this goal. Through this work, we aim to broaden understanding of industry experiences relating to motherhood to identify what needs to change and to share expertise to develop potential solutions.

Finally, this study built on the, primarily quantitative, work of Oxford Brookes University for Women in Racing's 2017 study. That work identified a need for greater support

for women during pregnancy and maternity, in addition to dealing more generally with family life and caring responsibilities. The subsequent qualitative study has enabled us to develop a much deeper understanding of what is needed through a rich set of data, where we engaged with close to 120 individuals. As well as collecting opinions based on lived experience, we were also able to collate good practice for employers and wide-ranging suggestions for solutions.

We look forward to seeing the industry take up the challenge and work together to move forward.

### THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The overall aims of the project were to explore the practicalities of being a working mother in the horseracing industry, including working practices, maternity leave, managing perceptions and work-life balance. These were discussed during the initial symposium, with panellists and some audience members sharing their experiences. The next stages of the study involved desk-based research to assess existing literature, followed by face-to-face and online discussions.

Key issues identified from previous research on motherhood and employment more broadly included: the persistence of discrimination related to pregnancy and maternity; a prevailing 'motherhood penalty', where women remain disadvantaged in the labour market despite their advancements in education and workforce participation (in contrast to a 'fatherhood wage premium'); workplaces being designed around (outdated) ideas of an 'ideal worker' who has no social or caring obligations outside work; and the positive and negative aspects of working flexibly to accommodate childcare. In addition, Women who are mothers are under constant pressure to comply with societal ideas of 'good parenting'; if they are child-free by choice they are seen as less nurturing. Research in horseracing has shown that women's experiences are often characterised by gender stereotypes and traditional conceptions of gender roles.

Data collection involved eight workshops, two of which were face-to-face and the others online to comply with COVID-19 restrictions. These involved 50+ attendees, with a very broad range of representation from across the industry, including training yard and stud staff (past and present), educational staff from the racing colleges, welfare and careers advisers, trainers and current, former and aspiring jockeys. Various aspects of horseracing, such as racing administration (including regulators and governing bodies), betting and gaming, marketing, racecourse management, bloodstock and breeders, finance and accounting, and HR were represented. Participants ranged from those relatively new to the industry, (eg. students) to those with vast experience across different parts of the industry. In addition, seven telephone and video-link interviews were conducted with senior industry stakeholders to contribute to a macro-view of the industry and add to the rich data obtained from the workshops.

## Industry overview

Working in horseracing is generally considered to be a vocational, lifestyle choice, where the demands of the industry can be extensive and difficult to reconcile with family life, with long hours, evening and weekend working. There are stark differences within the industry, with some parts of the sector, such as racecourses, governing bodies and the more 'corporate' and office-based roles being more able to provide good work-life balance, with policies and procedures in place to support this. A widespread perception, identified by many participants who contributed to this project, is that some roles in the industry simply do not allow for women to have both a family and a successful career. It was often commented that the conversation around these factors has been slower to change in horseracing than elsewhere in society and that family responsibilities are a reality of life. Where these issues are not discussed they can become taboo, contributing to a tone of intolerance towards experiences such as pregnancy, maternity and childcare, which are considered wholly 'feminine' concerns.

### The working environment

Findings related to the work environment differed according to the size of employer as well as the section of the industry in which participants worked. Larger employers, such as some of the bigger racecourses, usually have formal structures in place to facilitate better family-life balance.

Smaller training yards and studs at the other end of the scale would be less likely to have these resources, and tend to have a more informal approach to staff management, and staff may have less access to formal support.

Training yards were highlighted as being particularly diverse in their approach, and participants described larger and smaller yards as having different pros and cons: larger ones, for example, may be able to offer greater flexibility of roles, they may be more hierarchical and impersonal.

Smaller yards and rural employers were often described as more willing to 'make something work' despite fewer resources, with closer family-like relationships and an appreciation of individual skills and loyalty.

The hubs, particularly Newmarket, were felt to be inflexible in some respects, though participants described a new generation of trainers coming through with a better understanding of the need for improved work-life balance, and who were potentially more receptive to change.

Overall, the industry was described as being compartmentalised, existing in many silos. This can mean individuals are proficient in their given area, but it also constrains learning and sharing of good practice across different areas of expertise. Teamwork and loyalty are strong across the industry and highly valued.

### 'We've always done it this way'

There is a perceived reluctance to change existing structures and practices because "*we've always done it this way*" which needs to be addressed. Some employers were described as 'short-sighted' and reluctant to consider any types of change or different working patterns, such as flexible working, part-time hours or job-sharing, which might provide more family-friendly options. Failure to embrace change is not confined to one area, with an 'old-school mind-set' described as typical of the wider industry.

In governance and administration as well as areas such as hospitality and events management, some participants observed that "*times have changed a lot in ways for the better*". Where there is slower change, such as in some training yards, it was recognised that these can be a pressurised environments operating on low margins leaving less room for flexibility.

### **Motherhood and 'having it all' or child-free by choice?**

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A key discussion point was whether women can 'have it all', i.e. both a career and children. Those who felt they had done both successfully said they had had to work extremely hard, compromise and make 'tough choices'. Others argued that the expectation to have both shows an unreasonable "sense of entitlement" or is "not necessarily something that the racing industry has to deal with".

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It was described as "incredibly hard" for women to make decisions about having children, and how narrow their options can be in trying to fit family with career, with pregnancy and maternity having a "stigma" attached. Several participants shared their dilemmas of deciding when to have children in order to fit in with their career.

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Those who had decided not to have children felt that there had never been a right time and that, for them, staying in the industry took precedence. Both senior women who are child-free and those with children were described as positive role models within the industry, though it was argued that having more mothers in senior roles would lead to positive cultural change.

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Yard staff discussed how having children can preclude you from some of the most enjoyable and exciting aspects of the job and that you "move down the pecking order" as soon as you are pregnant. Combining riding as a jockey with motherhood was seen as close to impossible, and a lack of specific support to help women jockeys to stay in the industry following pregnancy and maternity was felt to be an important negative factor.

### **The 'leaky pipeline'**

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Many participants identified women they knew who had reluctantly left because they could not cope in combining childcare with the role, citing poor treatment and lack of support as well as an unspoken understanding that (new) motherhood and racing were simply incompatible. Those who had been able to stay in the industry also considered themselves "lucky" to have remained.

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A significant number of capable young women who are keen to progress are leaving the industry prematurely. Some "leave mentally" long before they leave in person, believing that employers would not want to take them on because they may become pregnant, and that once they start a family their opportunities for career progression, or even just to remain in the industry, are small.

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There were some reports of poor (including discriminatory) employment practices: for example, being asked about plans to have children in a job interview, being refused a role following maternity leave, being told "no, that job's for a boy" and having pool money withheld when on maternity leave.

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It was agreed that the industry needs to plan for and respond to this 'leaky pipeline' and to educate young women and make them fully aware of their career/ employment options.

### **Access to guidance (failing to understand entitlements)**

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Employees often do not engage with the support mechanisms available to obtain advice and guidance (though some participants talked about accessing National Association for Racing Staff), and some individuals are not aware of the statutory minimum support. In smaller companies, staff may find it particularly difficult to seek advice, especially if they want to avoid sharing plans for starting a family due to fears of negative judgement.

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Some participants reported a lack of transparency or easily-available information on their employment terms and conditions and their entitlements around pregnancy and maternity: It was also suggested that there is little understanding around paternity leave.

### **Experiences of pregnancy, maternity and early motherhood**

Workshop participants reported a wide range of experiences working within the industry during pregnancy, maternity leave and/or while caring for children. Several spoke of the need to manage others' perceptions of themselves within the workplace, which could go as far as not mentioning their motherhood at all at work.

Some discussed negative reactions to their pregnancy announcement from employer and colleagues. There were several reports of women delaying telling their employer because they were fearful of the reaction. This had "put off" other women in various parts of the industry, who were still deciding whether to have a family, but did not feel confident about broaching the subject at work. Some participants reported that once they were pregnant they were viewed differently, excluded or punished.

A resulting lack of open communication around pregnancy has a detrimental effect on staff management and further reinforces negative connotations of staff pregnancy and maternity as a burden.

Women with children talked about the guilt they experienced over the long hours their children spent in childcare, or feeling the need to work even when their child was unwell. While these feelings of guilt are not exclusive to mothers in the horseracing industry, for some there was the additional worry of neglecting their horses. Some also felt that they were made to feel like "an inconvenience" for having children at all, and were not seen as team players in the eyes of both employers and colleagues.

Negative experiences were often exacerbated by being freelance or self-employed, and it was reported that it is not uncommon for women to be pressured into becoming self-employed for avoidance of paying maternity pay.

Participants felt that racing is behind the curve in this area, with mothers in other sectors being able to take a 'reasonable' amount of maternity leave, whereas those in racing often take much shorter leave. Women who had left because they were unable to cope may have been able to stay in the industry if they had been better supported in easing back into the role and there had been greater sensitivity to individual needs.

### **Returning to work after maternity leave**

Some participants voiced concerns of a negative reception from employer and colleagues when returning to work after maternity leave, and limitations to their career options. Good practice was described by some of the women, for example, paid 'keeping-in-touch days' during maternity leave that also helped to ease the way back into work after maternity leave and instil confidence.

Keeping-in-touch days are by no means the norm, however, with women describing a need to 'educate' their employers.

Some had found it relatively easy to return to their jobs after maternity leave. Others described difficulties where there were expectations that they would resume their duties as before, which was not always possible. Changes in attitudes to their job (e.g. greater risk aversion after becoming a parent), physical capabilities and childcare issues, however, can vary greatly between women, and this potential for difference should be recognised and supported accordingly. This was particularly relevant in yards, where it is good practice for trainers to have a conversation with women about their individual needs, carry out a risk assessment and take medical advice where appropriate.



### **Flexible approaches for a better work-life balance**

Working hours were identified as the biggest barrier for mothers, with greater flexibility (e.g. around early starts and weekends) needed to retain more women in the industry. It was acknowledged that this is easier in office settings and for those not working directly with the horses, though many gave examples of working patterns being adjusted successfully, particularly in smaller and more rural yards.

While certain roles can be done flexibly (in terms of hours or location), others cannot: for example, those which require staff to be on-call. The ability to offer flexibility can be constrained by business needs, and this needs to be addressed transparently.

Part-time working was seen as a solution for some, though this (or job-sharing) was rarely seen as a viable option for many job roles. This was particularly true for work involving extensive travel or for some specialist roles, such as veterinary care, where clients are said to require continuity; this has also been problematic for some of the participants. The very small number of participants who had worked part-time said that it was really full-time in terms of hours, but nevertheless afforded some flexibility.

Work-life balance is not just about women and childcare, but about all aspects of work and life in general, which should therefore be of concern to all. The 40-hour working week had made a substantial positive difference for many participants.

Several participants also made the point that younger people joining the industry increasingly value the availability of work-life balance options. The annual leave included in an employment package, for example, or occasional weekends off to spend time with friends and family are now felt to be a higher priority than in the past.

### **Childcare and support**

Childcare was described as a 'hot potato' for the sport and a constant source of anxiety, with inconsistent availability across the different locations of the industry, insufficient providers and hours of provision that do not meet the needs of racing staff. Those with children of all ages and needs must be considered. Affordability and understanding what is available are also issues.

Participants described a range of ways in which they had managed to 'make it work', for instance, by starting their children at nursery earlier in the day and other personal workarounds that often depended on employee/employer relationships with heavy reliance on family and friends. Participants discussed social pressures and judgement experienced by women, though this was recognised as likely in many types of jobs.

Yard staff in particular discussed the need for open channels of communication, cooperation and collaboration to help make a yard run smoothly, and for trying to accommodate one another according to different circumstances whether they have children or not.

Views varied about potential solutions. For example, some were in favour of child- and family-friendly solutions such as a 'kiddies corner' at events, while others felt that some aspects of racing are not appropriate for children.

Certain factors increase difficulties around childcare and support: for example, coordinating shift patterns between partners to have family time, or being a single parent: A lack of work flexibility can exacerbate this.

It was identified that men can take a significant role in childcare, though most do not think about taking their two weeks of paternity leave. Several participants highlighted that concerns over the possible detrimental impact on their career stops fathers from requesting this. Examples of senior men from across the industry as involved fathers would help to establish good practice.

### ***Mentoring, training and career progression***

In the past, there were limited opportunities for career development, partly attributable to a lack of qualifications and career structures within the industry. Structures now in place can support development, including CATS and JETS<sup>1</sup>.

The impact of having children was widely felt to be detrimental to career prospects and talent retention in the industry, with women “pulling back” from opportunities. Causal factors identified for poorer opportunities include the inability to freely discuss plans around having children and alternative career paths; a lack of a formal career structure which exists in other industries, and failure to create career options that acknowledge transferable skills and facilitate transition into other roles.

A key factor for women returning to the workplace with children is to build their confidence, and linking them to a support worker/mentor is therefore a good idea. Senior women being seen as involved with their families were felt to have a particular role in leading by example, being seen as involved with their families.

<sup>1</sup> Respectively, the Careers Advice and Training Service <https://racingwelfare.co.uk/cats-careers-advice-training-service/> and the Jockeys Education and Training Scheme <http://www.jets-uk.org/>



## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE AND COPING STRATEGIES

Box 1 presents examples of current good practice and coping strategies identified in the workshops. Coping strategies refer to practices used to 'make things work' where formal workplace support was either not available, insufficient or not directly address women's needs; together they represent an important basis for the development of future good practice.

### BOX 1: EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE AND COPING STRATEGIES

#### **The importance of dialogue**

A key theme cutting through all the workshops was the importance of having open conversations about the needs of workers with family responsibilities, colleagues and employers. There is no 'one size fits all' solution, as different people and workplaces have varying needs that are also changing over time (e.g. pregnancy, return to work after maternity leave, caring for school-age children).

#### **Mothers in leadership positions as role models and agents of change**

"[I've known a large yard with] women at the top of their organisation... who had had children and were managing and they had that as a good example to others. And actually those two women supported the people below them. I think it's the age-old thing of 'if you can't see it, you can't be it. ...I'm not saying that it was easy for those women with children in that yard, because they worked damned hard, but they managed and when other women were pregnant, there was a degree of understanding and support that I think probably wasn't evident in other yards where people hadn't got those role models for them."  
(Senior stakeholder interviewee, woman).

#### **Non-discrimination in recruitment practices – motherhood as 'transferable skill'**

One employer who participated in the workshops argued that she saw the added value of applicants with family responsibilities as they had a more structured approach to work and were better able to multi-task.

#### **Changing workload and type of tasks during pregnancy and on the return to work**

One participant, for example, reported that her role had been changed to office-based tasks when she found it increasingly difficult to work directly with the horses in the late stage of her pregnancy. Another participant stated that, after her return from maternity leave, she had changed to a new role which included working hours that were more compatible with her new caring responsibilities.

#### **'Keeping-in-touch days' during maternity leave**

One participant stated that she found being included in emails and attending paid 'keeping-in-touch days' very valuable, as she continued to feel part of the team and did not feel isolated when she returned from maternity leave.

#### **Flexible and family-friendly working arrangements**

The most important theme across workshops was the need for more flexibility in response to the individual needs of staff, for example:

- Changing hours of work (e.g. allowing part-time work; flexible hours).
- Allowing workers with family responsibilities to work from home if possible.

#### **Childcare support**

**Formal:** for example, one member of staff was employed to look after her colleagues children, alongside her work with the horses.

**Informal:** this included allowing parents to bring their children in to work in emergencies or, in a few cases, on a regular basis, as long as the safety of the children could be ensured.

#### **Give and take – "Happy employees ride more winners"**

Many participants acknowledged the benefits of providing flexible working options and generally a supportive workplace culture for staff with family responsibilities. Comments included that staff who were feeling supported would be happier in their work, and "give back" by being more committed and loyal. The development of a family-friendly reputation was also seen as a way to attract the best staff, and to become an employer of choice; this, for example, helped smaller venues to compete with larger racing venues like Newmarket.

#### **Mentoring and career progression**

One example could be found in the form of a mentoring programme by Women in Racing, which also involved the recruitment of a mentor dedicated to advising women on childcare arrangements.

**Constrained choice: children vs. career** – Although the experiences of combining work and motherhood/parenthood are similar to other industries, these are exacerbated in horseracing, a traditionally masculine environment where having a family is still often perceived as incompatible. The perception that ‘women can’t have it all’ and thus have to choose between children and career remains particularly prominent in the industry, although perceptions and support vary by employment setting office/ yard and skill level. Many participants spoke about the need to change industry mindsets with respect to ‘the way in which things are done’ to prevent the loss of highly motivated, loyal and experienced staff.

**Lack of awareness of workers’ rights and low sense of entitlement to support** - the need for communication between employer and employee was emphasised. Responsibility is often seen to be that of the employee. This is problematic as women across occupational levels in the industry often have a low sense of entitlement to support, and fear of being labelled as ‘not a team player’. Those who are often treated as easily replaceable (e.g. stable staff, jockeys) are also less likely to seek the conversation with managers/ employers. The need for awareness-raising and education was a consistent theme, and is important for men and women at all levels to understand the key issues and importance of family-friendly values.

**No ‘one size fits all’** - views on pregnancy and motherhood are pervaded by assumptions and stereotypes. Yet everybody is different with women having different experiences and support needs during pregnancy and upon the return to work. These factors are all a part of regular life, and the industry could be

more mindful of these individualised pressures.

**Flexibility and childcare support** - The need for flexibility was a key theme but the nature of needs varied between workplace contexts and during pregnancy and the return to work. Lack of flexibility in working hours in some yards is seen as a significant barrier. There is disagreement on the feasibility of changing riding patterns although changes to working hours have been implemented successfully in some yards. The example of the 40-hour week for stable staff, moreover, was an example of successfully redesigning and reshaping working models. A ‘COVID legacy’ was also identified, with potential longer-term implications for working patterns and support practices, with conversations about different work patterns opening up which allow a re-think on work-life balance. This situation, though brought challenges for those trying to operate alongside their children, highlighted some women’s reliance on childcare provision, and showed the precarious situation for the self-employed.

**Pockets of good practice and the business case** - losing experienced staff is an important issue that needs addressing and that the industry is ‘short sighted’ in this respect. Smaller workplaces, in particular, can tend to focus on short-term survival and resource scarcity can prevent longer-term business planning. Equally, it is important to ensure ways to share good practice, not least to demonstrate that some change is possible. To ‘demystify motherhood’, the conversation must reach all areas of the industry, from training in colleges to senior management. This can support a ‘can do’ culture, rather than feelings of guilt and secrecy due to fears of negative implications.

## SOLUTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Possible next steps, which build on the good practice examples identified and the solutions suggested by the research participants, are summarised in the following table. For a detailed list of solutions and next steps (see page 40).

SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES:	
Developing accessible resources for employees and employers	Develop a ‘Working Mothers’ webpage on the Women in Racing (WiR) website, including (but not limited to) existing materials which can be shared with stakeholders.
Communication and outreach	<p><b>Develop ‘Racing Home’ research findings and build on these</b>, to encourage more open discussion about pregnancy, maternity and family life, feeding into the development of both formal and informal solutions. A set of composite ‘case studies’ (see pages 33-39) has been developed within the full report. These use stories from project participants help us better understand and explore solutions to some of the dilemmas faced by women in the industry.</p> <p><b>Build on existing informal childcare arrangements</b> through a ‘networking’ structure (‘Mumsnet’ for racing?) for sharing news and tips about childcare, breaking down isolation, coffee chats (online or face-to-face); and feeding into a champions’ network as this develops.</p>



Promotion and awareness-raising	<p><b>Share examples of positive role models</b> who balance career and family and are willing to share openly their challenges and what can be achieved.</p> <p><b>A poster campaign</b> to provide guidance and context-sensitive information (in bathrooms, changing rooms, staff rooms, kitchens and canteens).</p>
Childcare and support	<p><b>Develop a 'buddy' scheme</b> where women work with another mother a mentor (e.g. someone with experience of pregnancy and returning to work) – online or face-to-face and confidential.</p>
<b>MEDIUM-TERM ACTIVITIES</b>	
Developing accessible resources for employees and employers	<p><b>Develop a 'Working Mothers' toolkit</b>, drawing on industry expertise and distributed to all training providers and trainees.</p>
Communication and outreach	<p>Maintain existing work and develop new initiatives to engage with women.</p>
Promotion and awareness-raising	<p>A series of promotion and awareness-raising initiatives and events.</p>
Career development	<p><b>Mentoring to build confidence in women and girls.</b> This will improve the likelihood that they will seek support and advice.</p> <p><b>A specific maternity mentoring arm</b> added to the WiR Programme, open to the industry, with specialist mentors.</p>
<b>LONGER-TERM WORK</b>	
Developing accessible resources for employees and employers	<p>Resources could include <b>a hotline</b> to inform employees and employers about rights and entitlements, as well as informal forms of support, <b>such as a Horseracing Participants Advice Bureau (similar Citizens Advice), or rehabilitation and racing centres</b> to develop mental and physical support programmes for returning mothers.</p>
Career development	<p><b>Developing longer-term career strategies within the industry</b>, which might involve increasing awareness around transferability of experience to other roles in racing as well as creating the necessary pathways that allow staff to stay in the industry.</p>
Childcare and support	<p><b>Conduct a review of childcare at the hubs</b> enabling those who use it to design solutions and meet the need for more flexible and affordable childcare at these locations.</p> <p><b>Review methods for introducing a mechanism of pooled funding to cover maternity leave for self-employed women.</b> This would begin to address seriously the issue of women jockeys and other self-employed women in terms of their right to family life.</p>
Facilitating cultural change	<p><b>Explore potential for greater access to HR advice and facilities</b> (e.g. through a centralised HR function).</p> <p><b>Sharing and embedding good practice around family life</b> to 'mainstream' new attitudes and practices across the industry's processes.</p>

**Facilitating cultural change  
(Continued)**

**Understanding and acknowledging the rigidity** of some constraints (e.g. timings for gallops, shift patterns) which set some work patterns in the industry, and ensuring that solutions are developed that are sensitive to the needs of particular industry roles and functions.

**Conduct a review of possibilities around part-time and flexible work and job-sharing.** This would benefit from a pilot scheme in one or more yards to explore the key issues and develop good practice that can be shared and used as an industry template.



# INTRODUCTION



The 'Racing Home' project began with a symposium on 18th November 2019, examining what it feels like to be a working mother in the horseracing industry, understanding the decision-making that takes place, and exploring the impact of returning to work after maternity leave. The symposium provided a forum for discussion that offered a more comprehensive understanding of the decisions working women make, with a panel of experienced keynote speakers who shared invaluable insights with an audience of 60+ participants. The practicalities of being a working mother, working practices, maternity leave, managing perceptions, work-life balance and the potential for isolation were all discussed, with panellists and some audience members sharing their experiences.

The symposium represented the first in a number of bold steps, in particular because the impact of having children is a topic which women who work in the sport often report as one they are reluctant to discuss, as they fear it could adversely affect their career prospects and others' perceptions of them. Building on discussions from the symposium, this research project was designed to highlight these voices in the industry by collecting the real-life experiences of motherhood and parenting 'on the ground', and exploring the views of other stakeholders. Through this work, we aim to broaden understanding of industry experiences relating to motherhood, to identify what needs to change, and to share expertise to develop potential solutions.

It is generally recognised that women form an increasing proportion of the horseracing workforce. Close to half (49%) of stable staff are women,<sup>2</sup> and more women than men (approaching 70% compared to 30%) are coming into the industry through the racing colleges.<sup>3</sup> In terms of senior and leadership positions, however, the industry is still dominated by men. In turn, it was identified that this shift has not been widely acknowledged or catered for, and that this may be causing many women either to leave the industry prematurely, or not to enter it in the first place.

Previous work carried out for Women in Racing by the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, Oxford Brookes University, identified that more could be done to support women through, and improve negative attitudes towards, pregnancy and maternity, noting that *"losing women at this stage is a drain on talent and industry resources"*.<sup>4</sup> In addition to attitudinal barriers, several factors were identified as 'structural barriers' to managing family life while maintaining a career in racing. These included roles that involve travel and shift work and living and/or working in remote or rural locations, which can limit access to good-quality childcare. On the one hand, some industry areas, particularly racecourse management (at the larger courses), allow for more flexible job roles that can fit around childcare. On the other, widespread self-employed/ freelance work creates a lack of paid maternity leave and support when returning to the workplace. There are also roles within the sector, in particular being a jockey, which limit the opportunities for women because of concerns that they will leave early to have children and not return. While some felt strongly that women in the industry face prejudice and discrimination, there were also those who felt that women who are less successful have 'chosen' family as an alternative or are not sufficiently committed or talented. The idea that women have made such choices and therefore must live with the consequences was suggested by some, though the fact that the burden falls disproportionately on women compared to men was less acknowledged.

The industry is losing both women who are already mothers and those who want to become mothers, which is likely to have high cost implications, often for employers operating on tight margins. This drain on talent is increasingly becoming a concern for the industry. A study carried out for The Racing Foundation, in association with the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), the National Association of Racing Staff (NARS) and the National Trainers Federation (NTF),<sup>5</sup>

for example, identified that 21% of all permanent posts in racing yards require annual recruitment activity due to staff turnover or growth. In addition, 50% of permanent vacancies in the industry are hard-to-fill, an increase from 48% in 2016. This is considerably higher than vacancies for other UK employers at 33%. The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) identify greater workplace flexibility as a key way to improve employee retention, not least because changing demographic trends such as an ageing population will increase the numbers of those with caring responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

Maintaining a flow of new talent, and also keeping experienced staff are essential to the ongoing success of the industry and the retention of expertise and organisational memory. The following qualitative study builds on previous research and explores the ways in which the industry can improve retention of working mothers and parents as one way to achieve this.

<sup>2</sup> Confirmed by the British Horseracing Authority based on those registered on the Stable Employee Register as at 31/8/2020.

<sup>3</sup> This was identified as the rate being approached in the racing colleges at pre-apprenticeship level. See Clayton-Hathway K., & Manfredi, S. (2017). Women's representation and diversity in the horseracing industry. Oxford: Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, Oxford Brookes University. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Clayton-Hathway and Manfredi (2017). Op. cit. P6.

<sup>5</sup> A survey was commissioned of racing trainers and racing staff about recruitment, skills and retention in the industry: Public Perspectives. (2019). Racing Industry Recruitment, Skills and Retention Research 2018. <https://www.racingfoundation.co.uk/storage/app/media/downloads/2018-survey-full-report-1.pdf> [Accessed 24/8/2020].

<sup>6</sup> CIPD. (2018). Flexible working relieves hard-to-fill vacancies pressure. <https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/news-articles/flexibility-relieves-vacancies-pressure> [Accessed 3/8/2020].



# OUR RESEARCH – METHODS & PARTICIPATION<sup>7</sup>

## 2.1 OVERVIEW

The study involved desk-based research to assess existing literature plus collecting qualitative data through face-to-face and online discussions. We carried out eight workshops,<sup>8</sup> involving 50 attendees,<sup>9</sup> with a very broad range of representation from across the industry, including training yard and stud staff (past and present), educational staff from the racing colleges, welfare and careers advisers, trainers and current, former and aspiring jockeys. Various aspects of horseracing, for example, racing administration (including regulators and governing bodies), betting and gaming, marketing, racecourse management, bloodstock and breeders, finance and accounting, and HR were also represented. Participants ranged from those relatively new to the industry, (e.g. students) to those with vast experience across different parts of the industry. Some at senior levels were keen to obtain insights into the change needed and to shape practices for the future.

## 2.2 PARTICIPATION

The majority of attendees were women ( $n = 45$ ), with a small number of men ( $n = 5$ ). Many different family structures were represented, including single parents, families with children ranging from a few months old to adult, pregnant women, those with no children and no plans to have them, those with definite plans or as yet undecided about having a family, and those with eldercare responsibilities. A significant number were currently self-employed/freelance or had past experience of this. Some were themselves employers.

In addition, seven telephone and video-link interviews were conducted with senior industry stakeholders to contribute to a macro-view of the industry and add to the rich data obtained from the workshops.<sup>10</sup> These individuals were invited by the project team and represented senior and executive levels from educational, horsemen, media, legal and governance, racecourse and animal welfare roles. They consisted of five women and two men, and had many years of experience across a wide variety of roles.

## 2.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

The following report presents a detailed discussion of the findings from our data collection. These are presented thematically, then followed by a reflective section drawing

together the main ideas which emerged. In order to show the detailed data we collected while maintaining anonymity for our participants, a set of composite case studies is then provided, based on the stories of some who took part. These can be used to support a richer understanding of the participants' lived experience, and explore ways in which employers and other stakeholders might develop/share good practice. Finally, solutions and next steps have been developed, which have evolved from the suggestions of our participants, allowing some of these issues to be addressed from the ground up. Anonymised, verbatim quotes have been used (in italics and bold) to give a richer account of the feedback received, along with good practice examples which were highlighted by participants.



<sup>7</sup> A more detailed description of the methodology is provided in Appendix 2.

<sup>8</sup> The initial two workshops were face-to-face and of 3 hours' duration; following the introduction of a lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic the subsequent six workshops were run online and lasted around 2.5 hours.

<sup>9</sup> Some participants with very broad and extensive experience attended more than one workshop to share their expertise across the groups, meaning that the total number for the workshops was 60.

<sup>10</sup> Stakeholder interviews ranged in duration from 35 to 65 minutes.

# LITERATURE & POLICY REVIEW

There is a great deal of literature relating to the impact of motherhood and caring responsibilities on women's careers. Its key features are briefly described below to provide context for exploring some of the underlying cultural and structural issues.

## 3.1 THE MOTHERHOOD PENALTY

Despite advancements in education and workforce participation, women remain disadvantaged in the labour market.<sup>11</sup> The reasons for this are complex; however, it is becoming a mother, rather than gender per se, that creates most of the disadvantage.<sup>12</sup> Much of the gender pay gap, which measures the difference between average hourly earnings of women and men, is a manifestation of this 'motherhood penalty' in monetary terms.<sup>13</sup> Around the world, inequalities in terms of earnings and occupational progression persist for women due to childbirth (and bearing the majority of childcare thereafter). Data on the UK, for example, show that the pay gap between women and men widens in the years after parents have their first child.<sup>14</sup> One UK study of the period 1991 to 2015 found the gap to be around 10% before the birth of the first child and around 30% by the time the child reaches the age of 13.<sup>15</sup> Part (but not all) of the explanation is that mothers are less likely to work full-time.<sup>16</sup>

## 3.2 (NON-)IDEAL WORKERS – MANAGING STAFF PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY

Organisational theory<sup>17</sup> argues that workplaces tend to be designed around (outdated) ideas of an 'ideal worker' who has no social or caring obligations outside work. This is also referred to as a masculine model of work, where men's work trajectories and men's bodies are implicitly regarded as the norm,<sup>18</sup> while women of childbearing age are perceived as 'risky' employees.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, staff pregnancy and maternity are often perceived by employers to be disruptive and costly. Smaller firms, in particular, often assume that they cannot afford maternity support and fear the managerial and financial burden involved.<sup>20</sup> However, employers' resistance to maternity support is often based on assumptions rather than negative experience.<sup>21</sup> A large-scale UK-based study of pregnancy- and maternity-related discrimination at work<sup>22</sup> found that employers with recent experience (in the past three years) of staff pregnancy generally had a more positive attitude than those without. In addition, most employers could not observe decline in work morale or performance among pregnant women and new mothers, despite their initial fears.



<sup>11</sup> Harkness, S., Borkowska, M., & Pelikh, A. (2019). Employment pathways and occupational change after childbirth. London: Government Equalities Office.

<sup>12</sup> Stumbitz, B., Lewis, S., & Rouse, J. (2018). Maternity management in SMEs: A transdisciplinary review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 20(2), pp. 500-522.

<sup>13</sup> Budig, M. J., Misra, J., & Boeckmann, I. (2012). The motherhood penalty in cross-national perspective: the importance of work-family policies and cultural attitudes. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 19, 163-193.

<sup>14</sup> Francis-Devine, B., & Pyper, D. (2020). The Gender Pay Gap. Briefing Paper, Number 7068, 6 March 2020, House of Commons Library.

<sup>15</sup> Costa Dias, M., Joyce, R., & Parodi, F. (2018). Wage progression and the gender wage gap: The causal impact of hours of work. London: The Institute for Fiscal Studies.

<sup>16</sup> Adams, L., Winterbotham, M., Oldfield, K., McLeish, J., Stuart, A., Large, A., & Selner, S. (2016a). Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination and disadvantage: Experiences of mothers. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Equality and Human Rights Commission.

<sup>17</sup> Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: a theory of gendered organizations. *Gender and Society*, 4, 139-158.

<sup>18</sup> Bailyn, L. (2011). Redesigning work for gender equity and work - personal life integration. *Community, Work & Family*, 14, 97-112.

<sup>19</sup> Lewis, S., Stumbitz, B., Miles, L., & Rouse, J. (2014). Maternity protection in SMEs: An international review. Geneva: International Labour Office.

<sup>20</sup> Stumbitz et al. (2018).

<sup>21</sup> Adams, L., Winterbotham, M., Oldfield, K., McLeish, J., Stuart, A., Large, A., Murphy, L., Rossiter, H., & Selner, S. (2016b). Pregnancy and maternity-related discrimination and disadvantage: Experiences of employers. London: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Equality and Human Rights Commission.

<sup>22</sup> This work was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BEIS) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

### 3.3 BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY – FLEXIBLE WORKING AS PANACEA?

Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) are often presented as a panacea to help staff combine work and family.<sup>23</sup> Provision of flexible working options may vary in level of formality and degree of flexibility offered.<sup>24</sup> Smaller workplaces, in particular, tend to be negotiated informally rather than based on a formal request.<sup>25</sup> The benefits of FWAs have been explored widely and include higher levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment: employees respond to the ability to work flexibly by increasing their work effort, in order to 'give back' to their employer.<sup>26</sup> However, mothers often 'buy flexibility' by accepting work below their potential, foregoing career opportunities and working more for less. Therefore, while a low-cost support solution for employers, they can come at a price for staff.<sup>27</sup> Lack of awareness of rights, societal views on work and motherhood, as well as workplace culture are all factors that shape employees' sense of entitlement, i.e. what support they feel is fair to ask for at work.<sup>28</sup> Fearing negative consequences of some sort, women thus often hesitate to ask for time off or additional flexibility.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.4 MATERNITY-RELATED DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

Although pregnancy and maternity rights at work have been extended over the past 15 years,<sup>30</sup> maternity-related discrimination persists and, in some cases, has increased as well. Adams et al's study of pregnancy and maternity<sup>31</sup> found that three in four mothers (77%) reported a negative or discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave, or upon their return to work. Half of mothers (50%) described a negative impact on their opportunity, status, or job security, including, for example, missing out on promotion or training opportunities, removal of duties and being treated with less respect, and being threatened with dismissal or pressurised to resign. One in five mothers (20%) reported experiences of harassment or negative comments relating to pregnancy or flexible working from their employer and/or colleagues.

### 3.5 THE ROLE OF FATHERS, CHANGING WORKPLACE CULTURES AND NEW GENERATIONS

In contrast, fatherhood has been found to positively impact men's career prospects and earnings, referred to as the "daddy bonus"<sup>32</sup> or the "fatherhood wage premium".<sup>33</sup> This is, however, based on the condition that fathers do not request too much time off work. A number of policies designed to increase fathers' involvement in childcare, such as the provision of Shared Parental Leave (SPL), have been introduced in the UK in recent years. However, take-up has been extremely low for a variety of reasons.<sup>34</sup> Most importantly, it does not currently make financial sense for couples to take SPL if the father's income is higher than the mother's. Wider societal norms, including the lack of a supportive workplace culture, have also led to men feeling embarrassed to request this option (though experiences differ by industry and job role).

<sup>23</sup> Flexible working can include different 'non-standard' working patterns such as, for example, part-time work, compressed hours (working full-time hours but over fewer days), flexitime (flexible start and finishing times around certain 'core hours', e.g. 10am to 4pm) or term time, as well as working from home and job sharing. See also types of flexible working set out by the UK Government: <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working/types-of-flexible-working>

<sup>24</sup> Stroup, C., & Yoon, J. (2016). What impact do flexible working arrangements (FWA) have on employee performance and overall business results? Cornell University, ILR School: <http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/student/115> [Accessed 19/9/2020]

<sup>25</sup> Stumbitz et al. (2018).

<sup>26</sup> CIPD. (2020). Flexible working practices. Factsheet. Available from: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/Export/ToPdf?path=%252fknowledge%252ffundamentals%252frelations%252fflexible-working%252ffactsheet>; Kelliher, C., & Anderson, D. (2010). Doing more with less? Flexible working practices and the intensification of work. *Human relations*, 63(1), 83–106.

<sup>27</sup> Adams et al. (2016a).

<sup>28</sup> Herman, C., & Lewis, S. (2012). Entitled to a sustainable career? Motherhood in science, engineering, and technology. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68, 767–789.

<sup>29</sup> Adams et al. (2016a).

<sup>30</sup> These include: the Work and Families Act 2006, which introduced 52 weeks of maternity leave for all employees and Keeping in Touch Days; the Additional Paternity Leave Regulations 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014, which extended the right to request flexible working to all employees.

<sup>31</sup> Adams et al. (2016a).

<sup>32</sup> Hodges, M.J., & Budig, M.J., (2010). Who gets the daddy bonus? Organizational hegemonic masculinity and the impact of fatherhood on earnings. *Gender & Society*, 24(6), 717–745.

<sup>33</sup> Glauber, R. (2018). Trends in the motherhood wage penalty and fatherhood wage premium for low, middle, and high earners. *Demography*, 55(5), 1663–1680.

<sup>34</sup> Birkett, H., & Forbes, S., (2019). Where's dad? Exploring the low take-up of inclusive parenting policies in the UK. *Policy Studies*, 40(2), 205–224.



### 3.6 MOTHERHOOD VS. CAREER – A MATTER OF CHOICE?

While (potential) mothers are often treated as ‘non-ideal’ workers, working mothers are under constant pressure to comply with societal ideas of ‘good parenting’.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, studies have shown how child-free women have to manage the societal marginalisation and stigma (women as selfish or less nurturing) associated with their non-mother status, particularly if they disclose that they have remained child-free by choice.<sup>36</sup> Women’s fertility decisions are thus highly complex and considerations about the career costs of children are just one influencing factor.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.7 WOMEN IN THE HORSERACING INDUSTRY

Academic literature on women in the horseracing industry is scarce. Horseracing continues to be a male-dominated sport characterised by deeply-entrenched tradition and gender stereotyping.<sup>38</sup> Within horseracing, female bodies are often perceived as weak, not made for hard physical or more suited to work in an office (or at home).<sup>39</sup> Such assumptions can shape structural disadvantage of women, with one example being that female jockeys receive significantly fewer opportunities to race than equally-qualified men,<sup>40</sup> despite recent research suggesting that they are just as good.<sup>41</sup> Recent work with training yards found work-life balance as one of the significant factors affecting poor staff retention in the industry.<sup>42</sup>



<sup>35</sup> Armstrong, J. (2017). Higher stakes: Generational differences in mother and daughters’ feelings about combining motherhood with a career. *Studies in the Maternal*, 9(1), 1-25.

<sup>36</sup> Blackstone, A., & Stewart, M.D. (2012). Choosing to be childfree: Research on the decision not to parent. *Sociology Compass*, 6(9), 718-727; Hill, M.E. (2020). “You can have it all, just not at the same time”: *Why Doctoral Students are Actively Choosing Singlehood*. *Gender Issues*, 1-25.

<sup>37</sup> Martin, L.J. (2020). Delaying, debating and declining motherhood. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 1-16; Verniers, C. (2020). Behind the maternal wall: The hidden backlash toward childfree working women. *Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology*, 4(3), 107-124.

<sup>38</sup> Clayton-Hathway, K., & Fasbender, U. (2019). Women as leaders and managers in sports: Understanding key career enablers and constraints in the British horseracing industry. In *Women, Business and Leadership*: (403-420). Edward Elgar; Roberts, L., & MacLean, M. (2012). Women in the weighing room: gendered discourses of exclusion in English flat racing. *Sport in Society*, 15(3), 320-334.

<sup>39</sup> Butler, D. and Charles, N. (2012). Exaggerated femininity and tortured masculinity: Embodying gender in the horseracing industry. *The Sociological Review*, 60(4), 676–695; Velija, P., & Flynn, L. (2010). “Their bottoms are the wrong shape”: Female jockeys and the theory of established outsider relations. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27(3), 301–315.

<sup>40</sup> Roberts, L., & MacLean, M. (2012). Brown, A., & Yang, F. (2015). Does society underestimate women? Evidence from the performance of female jockeys in horse racing. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 111, 106–118.

<sup>41</sup> BHA (2018). ‘Female jockeys as good as males, suggests Thoroughbred Horseracing Industries MBA study’. Live Updates, 30 Jan 2018. [https://www.britishhorseracing.com/press\\_releases/female-jockeys-good-males-suggests-thoroughbred-horseracing-industries-mba-study/](https://www.britishhorseracing.com/press_releases/female-jockeys-good-males-suggests-thoroughbred-horseracing-industries-mba-study/) [Accessed 21/9/2020].

<sup>42</sup> Juckes, E., Williams, J. M., Challinor, C., & Davies, E. (2020). Racing to a staffing solution: An investigation into the current staffing crisis within the UK horseracing industry. *Comparative Exercise Physiology*. DOI (1-18) 10.3920/CEP200018.



# FINDINGS

## 4.1 INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Working in horseracing is generally considered to be a vocational, lifestyle choice. Unlike some career choices, the demands of the industry can be extensive and difficult to reconcile with family life, with long hours, evening and weekend working. There are stark differences within the industry, with some parts of the sector, such as racecourses and governing bodies, more able to provide good work-life balance with policies and procedures to support this.

***Racing is part of who I am. I feel blessed that I can get up every day and do something that I love and I hope that we can make it easier for women to do that.***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

This is particularly the case where senior management or leadership 'set the tone' for employees to have an acceptable work-life balance. Often these are the more 'corporate' or office-type roles, which therefore have some flexibility around hours, allow for home-working, etc. Individuals from other areas of the sector, particularly those working with horses and/or requiring travel reported having difficulties in this respect. A widespread perception, identified by many participants who contributed to this project, is that some roles in the industry simply do not allow for women to have both a family and a successful career.

It was often commented that the conversation around these factors has been slow in the horseracing industry, and that ***"other industries [...] would have tackled it long before"*** (Workshop participant, woman). Many of the issues women face, they argued, are simply ***"the realities of life"*** (Workshop participant, man) which can be dealt with using pragmatism and operating some flexibility. It was said repeatedly that there is a silence around childcare and family life in some parts of the industry,

***[our senior manager] couldn't always attend late meetings in person or things were arranged at different times so he could make them and I think he was very appreciative of other people's home circumstances [...] Having that set right from the top meant that everybody then lower down the organisation became more confident that their own circumstances also mattered and would be understood by their managers.***

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, WOMAN

and ***"because you can't talk about children it becomes taboo"*** (Workshop participant, woman). Some of this was attributed to a prevailing masculine and sometimes "old-school male" culture, in an environment where, for example, women describe having to ***"act quite male if you wanted to ride good horses"*** (Workshop participant, former yard staff, woman). This can contribute to a tone of intolerance towards experiences such as pregnancy, maternity and childcare, which are considered wholly 'feminine' concerns.

### Good Practice: The importance of dialogue

A key theme cutting through all the workshops was the importance of having open conversations about the needs of workers with family responsibilities, colleagues and employers. There is no 'one size fits all' solution, as different people and workplaces have varying needs that are also changing over time (e.g. pregnancy, return to work after maternity leave, or caring for school-age children).

## 4.2 THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The findings relating to work environment differed according to the size of employer as well as the section of the industry in which participants worked. There are significant differences with larger employers, such as some of bigger racecourses, which usually have management and HR structures in place that facilitate better family-life balance. Smaller training yards and studs at the other end of the scale would be less likely to have these resources, and tend to have a more informal approach to staff management. Understandably, those working with horses are often promoted into more senior roles based on their equine skills rather than their managerial experience. Where this happens in organisations with no HR function, staff have less access to support.

Training yards were highlighted as being particularly diverse in their approach, and participants described larger and smaller yards as having different pros and cons. Larger ones, for example, may be able to offer greater flexibility of roles (for example, part-time hours or reallocation into office work to accommodate more conventional work patterns) as they employ a more substantial pool of people and generally have greater resources. These may, though, be more hierarchical and impersonal with the senior staff being less approachable. Smaller yards were often described as being more helpful and willing to be adaptive and flexible despite fewer resources, with closer family-like relationships and an appreciation of (and reliance on) the skills a particular individual can bring. The latter description was also applied to rural employers and/or those away from the

main hubs who, it was felt, were more likely to **“make something work”** (Workshop participant, woman) rather than risk losing staff who might be difficult to replace.

Some barriers to change were also described: for example, larger yards are more likely to have set times for gallops, which was repeatedly raised as a constraint on work patterns, whereas it is easier for smaller yards to be flexible about this. The hubs, particularly Newmarket, were described as being inflexible in some respects, not least because of **“an obsession with getting up early”** (Stakeholder, man). Conversely, employees might be forced to stay with a rural employer because there are no local alternatives and smaller employers could also be slow to change.

Participants also spoke of a new generation of trainers coming through who might have a better understanding of a need for improved work-life balance or family life, and potentially be more receptive to change; it was helpful to **“have someone who ‘gets’ children, particularly when you have your child’s events to go to”** (Workshop participant, stable staff, woman). In Scotland, there is a smaller racing community that was felt to have more open lines of communication and support. Overall, though, the industry was described as being compartmentalised, existing in many silos. This can mean individuals are expert in their one area, but it also constrains learning and sharing of practice across different areas of expertise and skill. There are, therefore, limitations to the sharing of any good practice that has potential to drive change.

#### 4.2.1 ‘We’ve always done it this way’

Many participants expressed, often with frustration, that there is a reluctance to change some existing structures and practices because **“we’ve always done it this way”** and stressed that this mindset **“needs a rethink”**. A resistance to change was sometimes felt to have been inherited from previous generations, and that **“it’s a big step for the younger generation to do something different”** (Workshop participant, woman). Equally, some

**“My major opinion is that the entire system is entirely flawed in general in terms of the work/life balance. [...] I just think that people haven’t thought outside the box and the way things are run in racing is because it’s always been done that way. And it’s [...] very frustrating that people are not prepared to try something new because we are a very traditional industry.”**

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, WOMAN

felt that a younger generation coming through were happier to embrace change and described some trainers, for example, as **“blazing a trail”** (Workshop participant, woman) in being flexible for working mothers.

Employers were sometimes described as ‘short-sighted’, and reluctant to consider any types of change or different working patterns, such as flexible working, part-time hours or job-sharing, which might provide more family-friendly options.

Some parts of the sport were felt to be moving away from a more traditional outlook, particularly in governance and administration as well as areas such as hospitality and events management, and participants who had left horseracing and re-joined fairly recently observed that **“times have changed a lot in ways for the better”** (Workshop participant, woman). However, other areas such as training yards are more slow to change, and there were descriptions of **“unenlightened practices”** with some trainers being **“dinosaurs”** (Workshop participant, woman). It was suggested that some trainers may be nervous, or simply do not know what they can and cannot do in relation to staff pregnancy or related matters, and that it is important to find ways to educate them. It was pointed out that some trainers have been in the role for many years, and may not have received any updates on these issues for some time. Many trainers, it was argued, see themselves first and foremost as a trainer rather than a managing director or CEO, and are often **“beleaguered”**

**“The problem is that racing is not flexible [...] but racing has no interest in changing and becoming more flexible and versatile for working mothers and fathers [...]”**

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WELFARE, WOMAN

or **“spend so much time keeping everybody else happy”** (Workshop participant, woman) while operating on low margins, all of which can narrow their focus. It is important that the limitations they face as a business are understood when developing ideas around flexibility.

Failure to embrace change is not confined to training yards, as summarised by typical comments about the wider industry being **“stuck in an old-school mindset”** and based on the argument of **“why fix what isn’t broke?”** (Workshop participant, woman). What should be encouraged, it was argued, is the ‘let’s try to make it work’ attitude, and there were also several examples of this in participants’ descriptions of their workplace and their relationships with their team and/or employer. Several participants spoke of having trusting relationships with their line managers or employers, and the informal arrangements achieved through these were felt to be just as important as any formal policy or procedure.

Some also tied this in to a wider issue within racing about a failure to nurture individuals or a succession plan and instead is reactive and focuses on the day-to-day: **“Not thinking ‘we’ll support you and give you a maternity package and we’ll value your skills and bring you back and you can work for us for a decade’, but a reactive, panic-stricken state of getting enough horses out and**

**having people back at the yard” (Workshop participant, education, woman).**

People also described those who work in the industry as loyal, and often willing to take the onus on themselves to ensure that work is done. A team ethos is important in yards, for example, and this was generally described as a positive aspect of the work.

#### **4.2.2 Motherhood and ‘having it all’ or child-free by choice?**

A discussion point raised at most of the workshops was whether women can ‘have it all’, i.e. both a career and children. Some felt they had seen women achieve this, though there were also reports of women struggling or simply leaving the job/ industry. Those who felt they had done both successfully said they had had to work extremely hard, with one pointing out: **“...I had to work my backside off... it’s taught my kids an invaluable work ethic but it’s absolutely worth it if you love the horses... It’s a hard road” (Workshop participant, former yard staff, woman).** Several felt that the key was to compromise and make ‘tough choices’, and that **“if you decide to have a child you have to be prepared to accept that”**

**“I want to work like I don’t have children and have children like I don’t work”**  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

(Workshop participant, woman), though one stakeholder argued that to **“normalise the struggle in having children” (Stakeholder interviewee, woman)** is often to place most of the responsibility for dealing with them on women.

It was also argued that the expectation to have both shows an unreasonable **“sense of entitlement”**, and that **“there will be times where you cannot give your all to everything” (Workshop participant, woman).** A small number of participants also argued that having children is a free choice, and **“not necessarily something that the racing industry has to deal with [...] you have to take responsibility for your choices”**, expressing concern that other employees would need to take on work that those with children are not able to do, e.g. **“I have a kid now you**

**You have to make some choices in your life. If you are a female and you want to have children, it will have some effect on your ability to work [...] We should not shy away from recognising those realities just to be politically correct. What we should do is to make sure that given our strengths, our limitations, or constraining factors or whatever, everyone should be able to make the most of their potential.”**

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, MAN

**have to work every Saturday because I can’t?... [you] can’t penalise people because I make the decision to have a family” (Workshop participant, woman).**

It was described as **“incredibly hard” (Workshop participant, education, woman)** for women to make decisions about having children, and how narrow their options can be. Pregnancy and maternity, it was often said, have a “stigma” attached to them. Several participants shared their dilemma of deciding when to have children in order to fit with their career. Some workshop attendees had planned their children at a young age to ‘get it out of the way’ so that they could focus on their careers later, and one participant felt that if you have children during a period when you could be progressing your career **“you’re making a choice to give something up” (Workshop participant, welfare, woman).** Others, though, felt that they needed to get to a point where they were happy career-wise before making the decision. This was expressed by women from across the industry, in yards, offices and other roles.

Some participants discussed their conscious decisions not to have children, feeling that there had never been a right time and, for them, staying in the industry took precedence. Senior women who are child-free were regularly described as positive role models within the industry, and some of those senior women who took part felt that their child-free status had been a factor in achieving their position. One, for example, said that it **“[...] often occurs to me, if I’d had children how would I have balanced [the] role and responsibilities that come with it?” (Workshop participant, woman).** Some roles, such as being a trainer, were given as an example of this, with one participant saying that she knew of many women trainers who had made the decision not to have children, and while some have had family support to make it possible, **“the nature of the job makes it very difficult to combine the two” (Workshop participant, woman).** This and other senior industry roles, it was argued, often mean that ‘the buck stops with you’, and this can be difficult to combine with maternity leave or caring responsibilities. A number of successful senior women with children, for example, those working for racecourses, were also identified. It was, though, argued that in addition **“we need more senior working mums”** to ensure that **“cultural change is just natural and automatic, rather than having to be conscious and forced” (Stakeholder interviewee, woman).**

#### **Good Practice: Mothers in leadership positions as role models and agents of change**

**“[I’ve known a large yard with] women at the top of their organisation [...] who had had children and were managing and they had that as a good example to others. And actually those two women supported the people below them. I think it’s the age old thing of ‘if you can’t see it, you can’t be it. [...] I’m not saying that it was easy for those women with children in that yard, because they worked damned hard, but they managed and when other women were pregnant, there was a degree of understanding and support that I think probably wasn’t evident in other yards where people hadn’t got those role models for them.”**

**(Senior stakeholder interviewee, woman)**



***[...] whether you're in dressage or show-jumping or whatever, it's common knowledge that the horses, pregnancy and family generally don't go hand in hand. So it's almost like there is a choice. You either choose to have children and compromise or you choose to not have children and have a nice time.***

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, WOMAN

Those who worked in yards, in particular, talked about the ways in which, once you have children, it can preclude you from some of the most enjoyable and exciting aspects of the job, for example, going to the races. It was widely agreed that, working in a yard, you 'move down the pecking order' as soon as you are pregnant. Those participants who are now riding as jockeys, or were in the past, felt that to combine this with motherhood is close to impossible. Having a break was viewed as "career suicide", and "if you walk away [...] you're starting from scratch" and your position is gone. It was argued that, for a man to take a career break would be similarly damaging, and that jockeys would never tend to discuss their plans outside race-riding for fear of being seen as less committed. One former woman jockey would "never have even considered returning to race-riding", citing the inability to plan ahead in this role as one of the many constraints. It was pointed out that current women jockeys are all young, and very few have children, in contrast to men who can extend their careers into their 40s. Others identified that there is no specific support package for women jockeys following pregnancy and maternity, where other areas of the industry have structures in place to help. This was felt to be particularly important as women jockeys were said to often need to plan well in advance, moving into another role to establish themselves before having children thus curtailing their jockeying careers even earlier.

***A lot of jockeys didn't ever like talking about what they might do next, because they didn't want to signal to people that they were thinking about stopping race-riding. So people are thinking are they dedicated? Are they 100% focused on riding?***

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, MAN

Some participants expressed regret, in hindsight, that they had spent less time with their children to maintain their working pace to keep hold of their job or to maintain a career. One, for example, said that ***"you never get that time back [...] if someone had sat me down and said that, I might do things differently"*** (Workshop participant, woman). Another, who had taken three months' maternity leave, felt she had had little choice to do otherwise.

#### 4.2.3 The 'leaky pipeline'

A number of those who participated, including employers, talked about women they knew who had left because they could not cope in combining childcare with the role, but still ***"desperately want to be a part of this industry [...] they miss it"*** (Workshop participant, welfare, woman). Some participants in the workshops had left racing for their children and had now returned. They gave the reasons for being unable to continue as being poorly treated while pregnant, a general lack of employer support, and isolation because of geographical distance from family, as well as an unspoken understanding that (new) motherhood and racing were simply incompatible. Those who had been able to stay in the industry also considered themselves "lucky" to have remained.

It was identified that there are a lot of capable young women in the industry who are keen to progress but, nevertheless are leaving the industry prematurely. Participants whose roles had led them to engage with younger women in the industry described that they sometimes seemed to have 'left mentally' long before they left physically. Younger women in a relationship were also reported as believing that employers would not want to take them on because they may become pregnant, and ***"the image we get from young people [at colleges] [...] [is that] when you have a child your career is over"*** and for them "time is ticking" (Workshop participant, educator, woman), i.e. the 'biological clock' is a potent factor. The expectation that once you start a family your opportunities for career progression, or even just remaining in the industry are small and "you're going to have to leave" was evident in a number of the women we spoke with working across a range of roles, including not only yard staff but also those in educational and also more senior executive positions.

***Their options are very small... With the staffing crisis they're going to be letting down the team...' maybe I should go to another yard with better practices? Or go into the office? Or leave altogether?***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, EDUCATION, WOMAN

Furthermore, there were several reports of poor (potentially discriminatory) employment practices: for example, being asked in an interview when they were having children, being refused a role following maternity leave, being told 'no, that job's for a boy' and having pool money withheld when on maternity leave. One participant described herself as ***"quite fortunate to get the job because I was female and of an age where it was likely that I would have a child quite soon and it was almost a bit of an exception to take me on rather than a man at the time"*** (Workshop participant, woman).

Some of the younger women in the workshops agreed that the thought of juggling a career in the industry (particularly as a jockey) and children was ***"quite***

**daunting” (Workshop participant, stable staff).** It was argued that this needs to be pre-empted, and that the industry needs **“to have ideas in place almost before women go off to have children” (Workshop participant, trainer, woman).** One barrier to providing support for young women to plan, and to be fully aware of their options and entitlements is that often you **“don’t tend to hear from them until they say ‘I’m pregnant, I’ve left racing’” (Workshop participant, woman).** This resonates with perceptions that discussing pregnancy is stigmatised, and that there is a reluctance to raise pregnancy or the fact you are planning a family with employers until as late as possible.

**Good Practice: Non-discrimination in recruitment practices – motherhood as ‘transferable skill’**

One employer who participated in the workshops argued that she saw the added value of applicants with family responsibilities as they had a more structured approach to work and were better able to multi-task.

### 4.3 ACCESS TO GUIDANCE (FAILING TO UNDERSTAND ENTITLEMENTS)

In terms of understanding entitlements, it was felt that employees often do not engage with the support mechanisms available to obtain advice and guidance. In relation to support from employers, some individuals in the industry are not aware of the statutory minimum in terms of maternity pay, and a number of participants agreed that they **“didn’t have a clue [...] until the very last minute”** about what they were entitled to once they gave up work. There was also some feedback that it is more difficult to find out entitlements or employer policy when working for a small company **“because it would be awkward to ask”**. There were some concerns, also, about asking questions generally, because of fears of it leading to prejudice, for instance, if you are planning a family and ask HR for information. Though it was felt that the younger generation may be more **“switched on”** to these issues when looking at an employment package, and that **“employers need to catch up” (Workshop participant, welfare, woman),** some also argued that they were less likely to engage with the support provided by the industry. Other entitlements, for example, tax relief on childcare from government, were also felt to be poorly understood. It was agreed that it is possible to research some of the information as an individual, through internet searches and social media, to be properly informed and ensure that you benefit fully from what is available. Some participants reported going to Racing Welfare or NARS for help.

Several participants reported a lack of transparency of easily-available information on their employment terms and conditions and entitlements around maternity and pregnancy<sup>43</sup>, and it was also suggested that there is little understanding around paternity leave and Shared Parental Leave. Although some knew they could access

this information through such sources as staff handbooks or (for the larger employers) their human resources staff, this was often not the case for those working for smaller employers. It was considered good practice to make a copy of the staff handbook available in a shared space, such as the staff room, and also to ensure that staff understand which organisations they can go to for help

### 4.4 EXPERIENCES OF PREGNANCY, MATERNITY AND EARLY MOTHERHOOD

Workshop participants reported a wide range of experiences working within the industry during pregnancy, maternity leave and/or when caring for children. Several spoke of the need to manage others’ perceptions within the workplace, which could go as far as not mentioning their motherhood at work at all. Some women discussed

***I never felt any negative perceptions, but have been quite protective of my status. There are still quite a few people in the workplace that wouldn’t know I’m a mother. I don’t particularly talk about that in my working life. If there’s a reason I can’t do something, I don’t feel the need to explain. If there’s an issue with children, I just say sorry I can’t do that right at that moment. Your outward perception, how you present yourself is a choice you can make yourself... so you can control that a little bit [...] not that you should have to...***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

the negative reaction to their pregnancy announcement from employer and colleagues. There were several reports of women delaying telling their employer because they were fearful of the reaction, as **“pregnancy news won’t be met with joy or enthusiasm” (Workshop participant, woman).** This had ‘put off’ some in various parts of the industry who were still in the stages of deciding whether to have a family, but who did not feel confident about broaching the subject as it may affect how they were perceived. Those working in training yards, in particular, felt there is a lack of understanding around family issues on the frontline and that, rather than focusing on the value of the employee’s skills, having to treat anyone differently is often **“a hassle”**. Participants who had worked in yards also described treatment that made them feel like they were being ‘punished’, and that **“people view you differently” (Workshop participant, stable staff, woman)** once you tell them you are pregnant. These included having particular horses taken from them, not going racing, and not being kept up-to-date on work activities.

<sup>43</sup> Note that there has now been a legislative change and employers are compelled to specify all paid leave in employment contract from 1/4/2020. This will lead to more information and greater transparency around maternity benefits.



From the staff management perspective, a lack of open communication surrounding pregnancy was observed to have a detrimental effect, as **“not being able to have an open and honest conversation about maternity leave – you can’t plan as an employer because someone doesn’t have to tell you if they’re coming back or when”** (Workshop participant, welfare, woman). Several participants felt that a reticence to speak to employers was because of the masculine environment which exists in many parts of the industry.

**“I think [the attitudes] it would happen anywhere. But with that said, I don’t know whether if there was a management team that was less male [...] where I work my counterparts are all male.”**

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, WOMAN

Reports about women’s attitudes and abilities once they were pregnant varied greatly. It was stressed that good practice is for trainers to have a conversation with women about their individual needs, carry out a risk assessment and take medical advice in all cases. This is not always done, however: for example, one participant explained that when she became pregnant **“there was no health and safety in place, so I had to make those decisions myself”** (Workshop participant, stud staff, woman).

**“...You feel really cold or in half if you miss something the kids are passionate about but also if you miss a race [...] its very tricky”**

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

Overwhelmingly, the women with children in the workshops talked about the guilt they experienced on a regular basis, including over the time their children spent in childcare, or of needing to work when their child was unwell. Some argued that this is a normal reaction when parenting and that it would be the same regardless of the industry in which you worked. In addition, though, to feeling guilty about not spending time with their children or horses, there was added concern about their colleagues as they feel like **“you’re letting the side down if you’re not there”** (Workshop participant, stable staff, woman). Some felt that you are made to feel guilty for having children at all, and in order to deal with negative attitudes you may have to **“front it out”** (Workshop participant, stable staff, woman). Some participants, for example, had experienced an employer/manager or colleagues complaining if workers took time off to take care of a sick child; one described this as being **“between a rock and a hard place”**, not wanting to feel a **“burden”** on her employer if she needed to have time off when her child was unwell (Workshop participant, stable staff, woman). As a result, some mothers found they had to make a difficult decision about whether to send their children to school when they were **“borderline”**

**“I think the mentality within horse industry is if you don’t come in, if you are sick, it’s ok but if your children are sick, there is no sympathy in the majority of yards [...] You know the reaction you are going to get.”**

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

too unwell to go. Some participants discussed how, by simply requesting flexible working (which is a legal right), they could be labelled as **“somebody that’s not a team player”** (Workshop participant, woman), and that this in turn would put others off from asking. Some participants described extremely negative experiences of being a mother working in yards, and how they felt like **“a problem that needs to be solved”**, or **“treated like an inconvenience [...] they don’t even hide it”** (Workshop participant, former stable staff, woman). It was also argued that some employers understand their employees’ love of the job, and take advantage of this fact, knowing that they are unlikely to leave.

**“I had hideous things said to me when I returned [to the workplace] [...]. if you dared to take time off if your children were ill it was like... the next day, ‘I had to ride your ones yesterday’... Why should you be penalised for choosing to have children and work?... people treat you as an inconvenience because you have children...”**

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, FORMER YARD STAFF, WOMAN

Finally, negative experiences in respect of pregnancy, maternity and childcare were often reported as being exacerbated by being freelance or self-employed. One participant, for example, was **“totally paranoid”** about losing her job during maternity so took just a few weeks and **“never really lost touch [...] that’s quite sad, you never get to indulge yourself being a mother, but I had the idea that if I dip out now, I’m done for”** (Workshop participant, freelance background, woman). Another described how she had needed to leave a senior role when pregnant, and could only find self-employed work. It was also reported that it is not uncommon for women to be pressured into becoming self-employed to avoid paying maternity pay or, as reported in one case, because no one would hire a single mother on a permanent contract.

Some participants felt that racing is behind the curve in this area, and identified friends working in other sectors who were able to take a ‘reasonable’ amount of maternity leave as the norm, whereas those in racing often take much shorter leave, e.g. three months. Some described women who had gone back to work and **“realise they just can’t do it any more”** (Workshop participant, educator, woman) and had left. These women may have been able to stay if they were supported in easing back into the role.

Whether dealing with yard work or other, less physical roles in the industry, it was recognised that there is no universal experience in this respect, and that women's needs during pregnancy, maternity, or return to work can be very diverse. There were women, for example, who gladly **"worked until a week before birth"** (Workshop participant, woman), and another who rode out until over six months' pregnant and returned to work after a month. Many felt that the retention rate of women would be higher if there was more sensitivity around these differences. Good practice was identified as **"recognising there are going to be some women who want to be straight back [...] within a few months and others who don't want to come back for a year and those two are very different, but you've got to be able to cater for each"** (Workshop participant, woman) and help with the transition back to work after maternity leave.

#### 4.4.1 Returning to work after maternity leave

Good practice in this respect was described by some of the women, for example, paid 'keeping-in-touch days' during maternity leave that also helped to ease the way back into work. Participants felt that they were also important for instilling confidence, with one saying that being able to take part in these **"makes you feel like you again [...] [and that] you need to go back – you can start in the office, start on the quieter horse."** (Workshop participant, former stable staff, woman). Keeping-in touch days, though, are not always the norm. One participant, for example, reported asking for them and in the process educated her employer, with another stating that this type of provision was part of an **"education mission for employers"** (Workshop participant, careers development, woman). Some participants voiced concerns about receiving a negative reception from employer and colleagues when returning to work after maternity leave. Those who had returned after maternity leave had often experienced limited career options. Although some had made a successful switch from yard work to working in office-based and/or educational or welfare-related roles, others described a need to renegotiate their position if elements of their role – such as being on call – were no longer possible. In yard roles, a transition was sometimes made more problematic by employers' expectations that they would resume their duties as before, without any exploration of the changes they had undergone or the impact these had. Issues were thus raised about the impact of pregnancy on the body and the related time away from the workplace. A reduction in core strength and the need to comply with weight limits were two areas mentioned. Spending time at the gym to regain former fitness levels is expensive and time-consuming, not to say difficult to fit around a new-born/small child. Moreover, the point was made that if you're returning from injury or a fall **"it's all mapped out for you"**, but **"if you come back after having had a baby they don't have these filters ..."** (Workshop participant, former yard staff, woman). Furthermore, a number of participants discussed the ways in which having children can change women's attitudes to their job role, specifically those working 'on the ground' with

the horses which can be a dangerous job. Having a child was described by a number of participants as a point at which priorities change, making women more risk-averse, so therefore less likely to want to ride yearlings or more 'naughty' horses and more concerned with health and safety issues, manual handling, protective wear, etc.

#### Good Practice: Changing workload and type of tasks during pregnancy and on return to work

For example, one participant reported that her role was changed to office-based tasks, when she found it increasingly difficult to work directly with the horses in the late stage of her pregnancy. Another participant stated that, after her return from maternity leave, she changed to a new role which included working hours that were more compatible with her new care role.

***There are a number of challenges, some very obvious, so if your role involved riding then there's going to be a point of time for anyone during a pregnancy when you're going to stop doing that. Some have a large element of choice as to when that will be, but I'm conscious that some employers take that choice out of people's hands early on and just say that people are not going to ride [...] And there is an expectation that you kind of pick up where you left off, which I think isn't true either, and isn't helpful.***

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, MAN

#### 4.4.2 Flexible approaches for a better work-life balance

Across the workshops, it was argued that working hours are the biggest barrier for working mothers and that greater flexibility could help retain more women in the industry. It was also reported as being very hard for many to maintain a work-life balance. Reasons cited included inflexibility around very early starts or having few weekends free. While there was agreement that it was easier to provide flexibility in office settings and for those not directly working with the horses, participants knew of a variety of examples where working patterns had been adjusted, particularly in small and rural yards, but also in some large yards. For instance, in one case, staff were working in shifts, with some coming in early in the morning, finishing at 12pm and coming back at 3:30pm and staying for a late feed, while those with young children started later, worked through their lunch and then finished at 3pm to collect their children. A few participants in roles that did not involve (daily) direct work with the horses reported working from home regularly (for example, two days per week) or in emergencies (for example, when a child was sick).

***There are a lot of people who'd come back into the industry if they could do the school run.***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, MAN

While certain roles can be done flexibly (in terms of hours or location), others cannot, for example, those which require you to be on call. The ability to offer flexibility can also be constrained by business needs. Racecourses, for example, are constrained by race-day timings and early starts and late finishes are essential to their successful operation. In those parts of the industry that are primarily office-based, flexible working was felt to be operating well, though in some cases there was a lack of transparency in the decision-making process, with some aspects decided **“behind closed doors”** (Workshop participant, woman).

***“It’s a very complex problem but I think hours are the biggest barrier to keeping women in the industry.”***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WELFARE, WOMAN

One participant, who had returned to a lower-status role after maternity leave, stated: **“I have partly chosen this because I don’t want to do the hours and the weekends, so [it’s] not completely forced upon me”** (Workshop participant, woman). Another had made a conscious move from training for **“practical issues and a choice about how I wanted my kids to be brought up”** (Workshop participant, woman), for example, to earn more money and in recognition that this was not a child-friendly lifestyle.

Part-time working was seen to be a solution for some, though this (or job-sharing) was rarely seen as an option for many job roles. This was particularly true for work involving extensive travel or some specialist roles, such as veterinary care, where clients are said to require continuity; this has also been problematic for some of the participants. The very small number who had worked part-time said that it was really full-time in terms of hours, but nevertheless gave some flexibility, which was a ‘godsend’. One, for example, described some disparity in hourly rates between part-time and full-time employees, and there was agreement between some participants that while you may be permitted to go part-time, you would

#### **Good Practice: Flexible and family-friendly working arrangements**

The most important theme across the workshops was the need for more flexibility in response to the individual needs of staff, for example:

- Changing hours of work (e.g. allowing to work part-time or flexible hours).
- Allowing workers with family responsibilities to work from home if possible.

often **“be working just as hard and doing the same as full-time”** (Workshop participant, yard staff, woman). It is particularly difficult within a small/medium yard for

people to be off at the same time, though some felt this could be better managed in some cases. One participant, who had worked for some time in a small yard in a successful team employing several working mothers, argued that a more flexible approach could be encouraged by focusing on the skills that different team members

***“This might irritate some people, but you have to accept that some of the more experienced, mature people they’re worth their weight in gold. The mums can be flexible in other ways, eg, come in on a Saturday with their kids, and [...] the positive can outweigh the negative.”***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

bring rather than the fact that they may, for example, work less demanding shifts to meet their family needs. Several participants were keen to stress that work-life balance is not just about women and childcare, but about all aspects of work and life in general which should therefore be of concern to all. Yard work in particular was described as difficult in this respect, as it is often **“very hard work with wide responsibilities”** (Workshop participant, woman), from which have little down-time, with one person saying **“we have a lot of pressure on us [...] like my horses, if I have a day off, 90% of my horses won’t get ridden...”** (Workshop participant, woman). The 40-hour working week had made a huge difference for many, being described as a **“revelation”** and resulting in **“some of the happiest staff I have ever seen”** because **“work-life balance is what people want and it’s so important”** (Workshop participant, welfare, woman). It is seen as an advantage that **“when you go home, you go home; you don’t spend three hours on the laptop or whatever business-y people do. You can then spend time with the children or when you have the weekend off”** (Workshop participant, woman).

Several participants made the point that money may be less of a concern to some younger people coming in. The annual leave included in an employment package, for

***“People don’t care that much about the money any more. If you can lead a nice lifestyle, if you can work one in three weekends, so that you can meet your friends and be with your family [...] We find that young people are definitely more about that.”***

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT, WOMAN

example, or occasional weekends off to spend time with friends and family, are now felt to be a higher priority than in the past.



#### 4.4.3 Childcare and support

Childcare was described as a 'hot potato' for the sport, with availability described as inconsistent across the different locations of the horseracing industry. It is a constant source of pressure, anxiety and planning, described as a 'moving feast', i.e. not just being about little ones, but becoming more acutely needed (and expensive) when having more children or a child with special needs. When children reach school age and beyond, it was argued, they need the support that only a parent can give with emotional issues or dealing with everyday problems. School holidays were described as a "nightmare" for some.

The hours during which paid childcare is available are often problematic where, for example, these are between 8am and 6pm. It was observed that insufficient numbers of providers work racing hours in the hubs, and wraparound care was generally difficult to find anywhere. It was also recognised that some places, such as racecourses, have nurseries in place, though operating these can be problematic for various reasons including regulation from local councils. Results of initiatives that the racing industry has introduced were reported as mixed. For example, family rooms and crèches have been introduced successfully in some locations, but have not succeeded in others. A nursery supported by Racing Welfare and local trainers was successfully introduced in Middleham, though there were also reports of a similar project in Newmarket that did not take off, and it was felt that this might have worked better if those using the childcare were involved in its design from the 'bottom-up'. Some also felt that there was a lack of awareness of what childcare is available. Affordability was often raised as a big issue, childcare could often take a 'huge chunk' out of earnings, though this was also felt to be a wider societal and governmental issue. However, the fact that childcare is more expensive during unsocial hours makes this a particular issue for staff in horseracing.

#### 4.4.4 'Making it work'

Participants also described, though, a range of ways they had managed to 'make it work', for instance, by starting their children at nursery earlier in the day (though it was recognised that getting children out of bed very early in the morning can be difficult or undesirable). Early starts could be an issue for women working in all parts of the industry (particularly if they had to commute), though it was particularly pronounced for those working in yards and studs, with some reported as getting children up to go to a childminder in their pyjamas at 4:30am, or riding out at 5am to get back and take over childcare. Others agreed that there are sometimes workarounds, and that these can be very personal in terms of your role and your relationship with your employer, for example, **"the kids come in sometimes and do work on an iPad for an hour [...] or you put your kids in the lorry or your mum comes racing with you..."** (Workshop participant, yard staff, woman).

Sources of childcare support often included baby-sitting,

drop-offs and pick-ups, and sleepovers with family such as parents, grandparents or parents-in-law, or relying on colleagues or colleagues' wives. This could be problematic where in-laws and parents are getting older, and **"There's only so many evenings your children can stay over at other people's"** (Workshop participant, woman). Participants also discussed the fact that the issues faced by women in racing, in particular experiencing guilt over juggling their lives, are experienced by women in all types of jobs, and that **"you always have that little bit of guilt once you've had children"** (Workshop participant, woman) and **"you just muddle along – the kids just have to get on with it. If you're honest, that's what everyone's doing with children in horseracing and outside"** (Workshop participant, woman). There was also some discussion

#### Good Practice: Give and take – "Happy employees ride more winners"

Many participants acknowledged the benefits of providing flexible working options and generally a supportive workplace culture for staff with family responsibilities. Comments included that staff who felt supported would be happier, and 'give back' by being more committed and loyal. The development of a family-friendly reputation was also seen as a way to attract the best staff, and to become an employer of choice, which helped smaller operations compete with large racing centres like Newmarket.

about the social and family pressures, which mothers in particular described as "pressure from all sides", and regular judgement about being a working mother or their parenting skills and choices, worsened by images in the media of **"mothers spending quality time with kids, building new den, baking cakes..."** (Workshop participant, woman).

Some participants spoke of the importance of communication, cooperation and collaboration to make a yard run smoothly, and trying to accommodate one another according to different circumstances, with one who does not have children saying, **"Maybe [it] can't be done everywhere but we've done it for five, six years and it's working. I hardly have a weekend off because mums want weekends off, but then I get the Monday off. If you accommodate these people, they will do more for you. Just talk to each other"** (Workshop participant, yard staff, woman). Throughout the workshops, it was often agreed that more open channels of communication in all aspects of the industry would be beneficial.

There were, though, some contradictory views about solutions, for example, one participant described how racecourses might have a 'kiddies corner' (with a heated tent), which works at Point-to-Point and is included in the price of admission. This might be replicated for racing staff at races (although not on the 'big days'), with a qualified person paid to child-mind. A counter-argument to this was that some elements of racing are not appropriate

for children, with one participant saying: ***“If you go racing, it’s not really the right place for a child to be... and you are paid to look after a horse... not sure if the trainers would go for this either... would you give a 100% of you if you are distracted?”*** (Workshop participant, yard staff, woman)

#### 4.4.5 The impact of different family structures

An additional factor mentioned by several participants was having a partner outside of the sport. This can be problematic, for example: for younger people who are unable to get time off to be together, and also for families who may be able to stagger their shifts to manage childcare, but will see little of one another. Others reported that there can also be issues if your partner works within the industry, for example, those whose partner is a jockey often end up doing all the caring work. Similarly, there is not the option to ‘mix and match’ childcare by each partner working a different shift.

Not having family around to help with childcare was raised as another important challenge. Single parents face particular difficulties, as they may have no choice but to work around the school run, and in roles that provide accommodation there can be limitations on what is made available to them.

Although it was identified that men can take a significant role in childcare, it was argued that most people do not even think about fathers taking their two weeks of paternity leave. Several participants said that a need to maintain a ‘macho’ image stops men requesting this and that ***“a lot of their senior male colleagues see this as a bit soft”*** (Workshop participant, welfare, woman). One participant cited a friend who was ***“desperate to take some time off”*** (Workshop participant, woman) but went back after one day because he had overheard criticism and was concerned about the detrimental impact on his career. In the same way that it was hoped a new generation coming through would have a changing mindset in relation to prioritising family life and work-life balance, it was argued that because ***“being a good dad used not to be cool, now it is”*** (Workshop participant, woman), demonstrating some examples of that across the industry would help to establish good practice.

## 4.5 MENTORING, TRAINING AND CAREER PROGRESSION

While it was agreed that in the past there had been limited opportunities for career development, partly attributable to a lack of qualifications and career structures within the industry, there are now structures in place which can support development, including CATS and JETS.<sup>44</sup> Many talked of improvements to career development, for example, through the introduction of training matrices and qualifications. The impact of

having children, though, was widely felt to be detrimental for career prospects. There were instances described, for example, of women ‘pulling back’ from opportunities, as it is not always possible to freely discuss plans around having children. This leaves no space to discuss alternative plans or pathways, with one participant stating: ***“what I have seen women are offered an opportunity and they know in their heads they want to have children or get married, they pull back”*** (Workshop participant, education, woman). A causal factor for the lack of development opportunities is the absence of the kinds of career structure that exist in other industries, nor the focus on recognising transferable skills that might facilitate a transition into another role. Other structures that might monitor and develop talent, such as reviews or appraisals, were not seen to be used across the whole sector. There was, thus, recognition that it was important to retain talent in the industry and to provide opportunities and guidance for possible ‘side steps’ (involving changing to a different role where women can still use their industry expertise) and career progressions that are compatible with family responsibilities.

It was argued that a key factor for women returning to the workplace with children is to build their confidence. In this respect, it was felt that mentoring programmes are a good idea, particularly as there are so many mature and experienced people with a lot to offer in the industry. Senior women with children were felt to have a particular

***I think that is holding us back, not having more female leaders and also women with young children who can showcase that it is possible to both have a family and have a senior leadership role at the same time [...] there is clearly still a glass ceiling. If you go to any senior stakeholder meeting it will be 70, 80, 90% male...***

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWEE, WOMAN

role in leading by example, being seen as involved with their families. Specifically for women returning to the workplace, it was felt to be a good idea to link someone returning to a support worker/mentor to answer all your questions and help you get your confidence back. It was also suggested that young people would benefit from being mentored.

#### Good Practice: Mentoring and career progression

One example could be found in the form of a mentoring programme by Women in Racing, which also involved recruitment of a mentor dedicated to advising women on childcare.

<sup>44</sup> Respectively, the Careers Advice and Training Service <https://racingwelfare.co.uk/cats-careers-advice-training-service/> and the Jockeys Education and Training Scheme <http://www.jets-uk.org/>



# REFLECTION ON FINDINGS

## 5.1 CONSTRAINED CHOICE: CHILDREN VS. CAREER

In many respects, the experiences of combining work and motherhood/parenthood explored here are similar to those reported across other industries. However, some aspects of these experiences are exacerbated in the horseracing industry, a traditionally masculine environment in which motherhood is seen as misplaced and mothers 'non-ideal workers'. Working in the horseracing industry is seen as 'a way of life' rather than a job, and having a family is still often perceived as incompatible. The perception that 'women can't have it all' and thus have to make a conscious choice between children and career remains particularly prominent in the industry, although perceptions and support vary by employment setting (office, yard) and skill level. The 'motherhood penalty' was evident in everyday practices, with participants sharing experiences ranging from discrimination in recruitment and staff management to barriers to career progression. Many participants spoke about the need to change mindsets in the industry with respect to 'the way in which things are done' to prevent losing highly motivated, loyal and experienced staff. It was argued that women who devoted themselves to the industry would not get anything back in return and, instead, be potentially left in a financially highly precarious situation. Single and self-employed mothers were particularly vulnerable groups in this context. However, there were also some signs of change. There was a perception that younger trainers/people were more understanding and supportive, compared to those with a more traditional outlook; some older participants were also more likely to voice that it was inappropriate for women to 'want it all'. Conversely, young newcomers were identified as another group that was often less understanding about the role of motherhood in people's careers, potentially because they had not yet reached an age where they would think about having a family themselves. The role of fathers is marginalised in the conversation, in line with other parts of society, as manifested, for example, in the low take-up of paternity and Shared Parental Leave.

## 5.2 LACK OF AWARENESS OF WORKERS' RIGHTS AND LOW SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT TO SUPPORT

Lack of awareness of workers' rights and employers' duties was widespread and the need for communication between employer and employee about these kept coming up in the discussions. However, the responsibility for bringing up these conversations was mostly seen to be that of the employee. This is problematical as, due to the prevalent masculine working culture, women across occupational levels in the industry often have a low sense of entitlement to support, including fear of being

labelled as 'not a team player' by colleagues. Those who are often treated as easily replaceable (e.g. stable staff, jockeys) are also less likely to seek the conversation with managers/employers.

The need for awareness raising and education around workers' rights and entitlements was a consistent theme, and this was felt to be important at all levels and throughout the talent pipeline. This included ensuring not only that young women understand their rights and are signposted to existing support, but also that employers know how to deal with pregnancy and maternity, and that those working in the industry (both women and men) across all levels and roles understand the key issues and the importance of family-friendly values to maintaining the industry.

## 5.3 NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL'

Views on pregnancy and motherhood are pervaded by assumptions and stereotypes, and yet everybody is different. Some women have issues conceiving or experience miscarriages, while other pregnancies are unplanned. Some experience morning sickness or complications during some parts of their pregnancy or may need a caesarean. Others are not affected by any of this and carry on working until close to the birth. Support needs during pregnancy and upon the return to work vary between individuals. For instance, some women are happy to ride until eight months pregnant, while others have to stop immediately due to a high-risk pregnancy. The same applies to the return to work. Some women may feel physically fit to ride as before while others may still need some time to fully recover from a complicated birth. Many participants reported that there had been no conversation with them about their return to work. Children, meanwhile, get sick or have hospital appointments, and there can be other family responsibilities, for example, those who have to care 'at both ends of the spectrum', i.e. elder- as well as childcare. Even natural processes, such as the need to express milk or take breastfeeding breaks, were reported as bringing negative judgement from colleagues. All of these are a regular part of life, and the industry could be more mindful of these individualised pressures.

## 5.4 FLEXIBILITY AND CHILDCARE SUPPORT

The need for flexibility was a key theme but the nature of needs varied (a) between workplace contexts (e.g. office settings, jobs that require frequent travel, yards); and (b) during pregnancy and on return to work. Lack of flexibility in working hours in some yards is seen as a key barrier. The practice of early starts was challenged across workshops and by stakeholder interviewees who work with horses, while there is some disagreement over the feasibility of changing riding patterns/hours. Some participants were also of the view that such

patterns could not be changed due to the demands of animal welfare (e.g. feeding times; to prevent animal from overheating). However, others challenged some of these arguments as changes in working hours have been implemented successfully in some yards. A reluctance to be flexible about aspects of the working hours, for example, were challenged, with participants pointing out that when needed, such as during equine flu outbreaks, it was possible to ride at different times. Similarly, the introduction of a 40-hour week for stable staff had initially caused “uproar”, but some trainers had taken the opportunity to successfully redesign and reshape their working model by, for example, adapting their practices so staff could have more weekends off. Triggers like these can therefore bring about positive change that would otherwise have been difficult to achieve.

A ‘COVID legacy’ was also identified, where there might be longer term implications for working patterns and support practices. Some felt that the pandemic could be a positive factor in opening up conversations with **“people realising things can be done slightly differently” (Workshop participant, woman)** and perhaps re-thinking what work-life balance is all about. It was mostly argued that not much would change in the yards as **“horses will still have to be taken out and ridden” (Workshop participant, welfare, woman)**, though acknowledged that new possibilities for flexibility and adaptation might emerge from the necessity to change working patterns at short notice (e.g. due to lockdown and school closures). Office-based work, would be most affected, because of the number of people who had continued to operate from home, sometimes working across regions with rapid adoption of technology to facilitate this. It must also be remembered, though, that this had also brought challenges for those trying to work alongside their children, and has highlighted how reliant some women are on childcare provision, with some needing to work into the night or the early hours to accommodate home-schooling and maintain their workload. A further area highlighted during the pandemic is the high number of self-employed individuals in the industry, who may have been forced to use up leave provisions and had little or no support other than this. A small ‘silver lining’ was that there has been an increase in those reaching out for support, which may allow for some educational work with a ‘captive audience’ to make the industry more aware of what is available.

High costs of childcare and lack of formal childcare that caters for working hours in racing (particularly early starts at 5am and on weekends) were seen as another key barrier. A few participants mentioned that attempts to adapt nursery opening times to the needs of workers in the industry had failed, even when subsidised (for example, in Newmarket and Middleham). It was felt that the likely reason for this was that provision had not been designed in conversation with those who were using it. Informal childcare arrangements at work were seen

as particularly helpful, and included the ability to bring children to work in emergencies or on a more regular basis in some cases, as long as their safety could be guaranteed.

## 5.5 POCKETS OF GOOD PRACTICE AND THE BUSINESS CASE

Across the workshops, there was recognition that losing experienced staff was an important issue that needed to be addressed and the industry was blamed for its ‘short-sightedness’ in this respect. Smaller workplaces, in particular, tend to focus on short-term survival and resource scarcity often prevents them from longer-term business planning. At the same time, they are more likely to operate on a ‘give and take’ basis and that staff who feel well supported through pregnancy/maternity will stay. As one participant asked, **“why ‘is it so difficult to ask for support as an employee who will contribute 30 years to the industry and wants to take eight months out?’** The combination of pressure from family demands and workplaces without support can, on the other hand, contribute to poor mental health and reduced performance.

Staff maternity is often seen as a financial and managerial burden. Smaller workplaces tend to operate with scarce resources and have fewer opportunities to cover for maternity-related absences. However, they were regarded as much better at providing family-friendly practices, such as flexible working arrangements and informal childcare support. More broadly, pockets of good practice could be found across workplace types. However, as operational practices vary so much across the sector, it is important to ensure pathways for sharing good practice, not least to demonstrate that some change is possible.

To sum up, there is an urgent need to ‘demystify motherhood’ by developing modes of conversation that are pulled through all areas of the industry, from training in colleges to senior management. An environment will need to be established that encourages conversation about needs and practicalities and a ‘can do’ support culture, rather than feelings of guilt and secrecy around needs due to fears of negative implications. There also needs to be a move away from seeing life events linked to family life as simply a ‘women’s issue’ that is barely tolerated in a man’s environment, not least because societal norms are changing and family life is increasingly seen as important to both women and men.

# CASE STUDY SCENARIOS

The following 'case studies' have been developed using some of the stories from project participants. Each is a composite, i.e. not based on any one individual but rather a set of experiences collated to help us better understand and think about some of the dilemmas faced by those in the industry, and explore how the industry can address these.

## SCENARIO 1

### RACHEL IS A YOUNG WOMAN AT RACING COLLEGE WITH AMBITIONS TO BE A JOCKEY

Rachel was brought up around horses and is passionate about horseracing. She is about to finish college and is excited at the prospect but also a bit daunted. She knows that she has what it takes to do the work well and fulfil her dream of being a jockey. But she's worried about fitting in her life. This isn't an issue for her now: she is not seeing anyone and is happy to work long hours as long as she can spend time with her mates some weekends. She sees, though, that she has a 'shelf life' in the industry, which will expire if she has children. She's heard all sorts of stories that a potential boss and other colleagues don't have time for this. Everyone says that when you have a child your career is over. There's no one special yet, all that is years away, and she wouldn't tell anyone her thoughts about this anyway.



*"I've not really decided if I want a family... but it all seems so difficult to carry on in racing that if it comes to marriage and babies, I'm off!"*

*"If I decide not to have children and concentrate on my career... isn't that a bit selfish?"*

#### Key questions:

- Has Rachel already 'left before she's left', which may limit her ambitions, or is she just being realistic?
- Might prospective employers be put off from hiring her because she may have children one day?
- What if she decides not to have children?

#### What would be helpful?

- An understanding of her rights and entitlements from the earliest stage of her career.
- Open discussion about having a family life and children within the workplace.
- Role models – other women who have children (or don't) and the career she aspires to.

## SCENARIO 2

**ALEXANDRA IS A WOMAN WHO WOULD LIKE TO RETURN TO THE RACING SECTOR HAVING LEFT SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO CARE FOR HER CHILDREN**

Alexandra felt that the combination of the inflexible hours and the precarious nature of self-employed work was too much to deal with when trying to bring up her family. When her second child came along and she was not eligible for paid maternity leave, she made the reluctant decision to move to another industry, and moved into an administrative role in an insurance office. Alex has always kept in touch with her friends in horseracing, and feels more and more that she wants to get back to it. She's not sure if things are easier nowadays, but the fact that her children are at school means she can better manage any demands on her time. As a single mum, though, she would need to be reliant on her family for any childcare needs as breakfast clubs and after-school clubs are too expensive. Her mum lives fairly close, but has a busy life. And there's only so much you can ask other people to do – even family – plus Alex does not like to rely on outside help too much unless it's for a backup plan.



Alex is nervous about some aspects of getting back into things, but horseracing is such a part of her identity that it feels important. She knows that it could be hard, but also that she has some great skills to bring to the industry. It's just about finding the right advice and a way back in...

*"My kids still need me a lot – just not as physically – to be there..."*

*"I want to feel part of a team again – and I miss the horses!"*

*"Racing is still part of my identity – just because I am a parent doesn't have to mean I'm not Alex anymore!"*

**Key questions:**

- What sort of role would suit Alex in a return to the industry?
- What needs to be in place to help her achieve this?
- What are the benefits of getting someone like Alex back into racing?
- Who/what organisations could support her?
- Who/what organisations could support her prospective employer?

**What would be helpful for Alex?**

- Help in recognising the transferable skills she has developed while outside the industry.
- An understanding of possible career paths and options within the sector.
- Some training and a re-introduction to the industry.



### MAYA IS A WOMAN WORKING IN A YARD WITH A YOUNG CHILD AND EXPECTING A SECOND

Maya's first pregnancy was really stressful. She was working in a large yard and knew that, as soon as she told her employer, she would no longer be allowed to ride out or someone would step into her place. She was also really unsure about any benefits and entitlements she was due, and didn't know where to find out. Maya was fine carrying on riding until quite late in her pregnancy, though pals of hers had had a far harder time of it and had been made to stop sooner. This had led Maya to keeping her pregnancy to herself for a while, then giving her employer less notice. It caused difficulties for her employer as they needed to plan around her absence.



When she got back, they seemed to expect her to carry on the same as before she was pregnant. It was so hard fitting in the baby with her role that she has now moved to a smaller yard with some flexibility in hours. Her little one is at school and she can usually work shifts that suit the school run. Some of the others are mums too, and they help each other out. She is very worried though about the changes a second child will bring and the impact on her employer and team that taking maternity leave will have. What if she doesn't have such an easy pregnancy this time? Maya has confided in a colleague, but hasn't told her employer yet and doesn't know when it's best to do that. After her previous experiences, she's dreading the return to work after the baby's born, too... but to leave racing is unthinkable.

#### Other stakeholders:

Maya's employer grew up on a racing yard and is keen to maintain the structures that have always worked for him. He was sceptical about changing some of the shift patterns of his workers to start with and wasn't sure if it was possible. But it became a necessity to keep some of his best staff – and so far it's working. In the past, a valuable member of staff left when she had a baby, which all happened quite fast from his point of view and really put pressure on his small team. It's tough recruiting people to a rural yard and all of the admin associated with finding new people can be overwhelming along with all the other work needed to keep the business going.

*"I can't help my staff unless they talk to me."*

*"It's important for me to retain my staff. I can't have more newcomers than core staff!"*

#### Key questions:

- How can Maya communicate with her employer to help them both plan?
- What support might Maya need during her pregnancy?
- What are the options to make things work with her second child?
- Who/what organisations could support her?
- What might be the impact on her employer and who/what organisations could support them?

#### What would be helpful to Maya?

- Earlier discussion and more open communication channels between employees and employer.
- 'Keeping-in-touch' days during her maternity leave.
- Exploring other work patterns such as job-sharing.
- Some 'return to the workplace' training and a re-introduction to the industry.
- A team meeting upon the return to work to discuss how to manage Maya's transition back into work in a way that best meets her needs and those of the workplace.
- A phased re-introduction to the workplace.
- Exploring a different, less physical role.

#### What would be helpful to her employer?

- More open communication with staff.
- Training and support on managing staff through maternity – both the legalities around employment and the more 'personal' side.
- Examples of good practice and ideas from other employers' experiences.

## SCENARIO 4

**BEN AND AYESHA BOTH WORK IN THE RACING INDUSTRY WITH TWO CHILDREN**

Ayesha works in a large training yard, and is up before 5am most mornings. Ben feels they are lucky – he is office-based in a marketing role and can work fairly standard 9-to-5 hours. This means he can work within the sport he loves and fit in childcare around Ayesha's working day. Where things work less well is in day-to-day family life, as they barely have a couple of hours together in the evening before Ayesha needs to go to bed. Ben is able to deal with the childcare, but Ayesha would dearly love to be able to see more of her children and watch them play sports at the weekends. She sometimes feels so guilty for missing their little triumphs. Since having children, they have started to question why there is not some flexibility in Ayesha's working hours. There was one time, too, when Ben needed to work away and their eldest was sick. Ayesha felt terrible for taking the time off work to look after him, and her colleagues made it clear they weren't pleased with her when she returned. It sometimes feels like a no-win situation.



***"Why do we have to start so early in the morning? No ones ever given me a straight answer!"***

***"I feel like I'm letting the side down when I take time off for the children – but sometimes they just need me there. What choice do I have?"***

**Key questions:**

- What are Ayesha and Ben's options for getting a better work-life balance?
- How can their employers support them?
- Who/what organisations could support them or their employers?

**What would be helpful for Ayesha and Ben?**

- More flexible working patterns for Ayesha.
- Open conversations with Ayesha's colleagues to reduce tensions and negotiate solutions that meet everybody's needs.
- A potential change of role with her employer.
- Examples of good practice from other employer.

## SCENARIO 5

### JASON WORKS FOR A STUB AND IS HAVING A FIRST CHILD WITH A PARTNER, WHO ALSO WORKS IN THE INDUSTRY

Jason and his partner both work full-time in a large stub. They are now the only ones in their friendship group who don't have children. They have seen friends and family, both within and outside horseracing, juggle childcare with their working lives. It's going to be particularly hard for them, however, as they both work similar hours with very early starts, so there's no way to stagger their days for childcare purposes.

Jason, though, has always wanted to be a father and take an active role in bringing up his children. At the same time, he is taking his work responsibilities very seriously and fears negative implications if he openly shares his views on fatherhood.



*"I've not really thought until recently about the impact on my career of having children. I'd expected my priorities to change, but never thought I'd have to change my job..."*

*"Some of my friends have pretty much carried on with their jobs as usual and their wives take on managing the childcare. We want to share things between us more evenly though... but that's not very common around here..."*

#### Key questions:

- What are his options to be able to continue in work and share childcare with his partner?
- How can his employer support him?
- Who/what organisations could support him?
- Who/what organisations could support his employer?

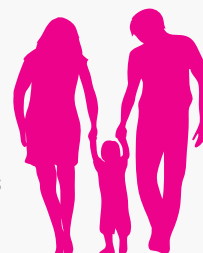
#### What would be helpful for Jason and his employer?

- An understanding of his paternity entitlements.
- Access to information about local childcare.
- Examples of good practice from other employers and new fathers.
- The ability to have an open discussion between Jason, his employer and colleagues.

## SCENARIO 6

**JASMINE IS A WOMAN WITH A YOUNG CHILD WORKING SUCCESSFULLY FULL-TIME IN A DEMANDING SENIOR GOVERNANCE ROLE**

Jasmine worked part-time when her child was very young, but was keen to take advantage of a promotion so it was essential to return to full-time work. It has been very, very hard work but she has been successful in her career and reached a senior role. This was made possible by juggling long hours with childcare, being given the opportunity to work flexibly and from home at times and also with the support of her husband who has shared the childcare. She is the only woman with any children at her level, and on one or two occasions she has had to point out to them the way things could be made to work as this was new to them.



While some colleagues are generally supportive, she has heard that others feel that she is trying to 'have it all', and that having chosen to have a child she should not necessarily expect to continue to climb the career ladder. Some have expressed resentment that they cannot always contact her outside of working hours, or that she has worked from home on occasion when her child was unwell. It's impossible to keep everyone happy, and to manage both work and home life – her family is important but so is her career.

*"There's so much focus on pregnancy and maternity leave [...] when you have kids aged between four and twelve, let's say, where a lot of stuff will have happened at school and they really need a parent there. That's a much harder phase of being a working mother."*

*"I see younger women coming through and I'd really like to use my experiences to positively help them with the challenges I know they'll face."*

**Key questions:**

- How can Jasmine's employer or other organisations support her?
- Are there possibilities for changing the office culture?
- What can Jasmine do to actively support younger women in her organisation and beyond?
- Who/what organisations could support her employer?

**What would be helpful for Jasmine, her employer and her colleagues?**

- Better understanding within the organisation about the importance of good work-life balance.
- Some additional support mechanisms for Jasmine to call upon.
- More senior women with children as role models (in this and other organisations).



## SCENARIO 7

### ZARA IS A WOMAN IN HER MID-30S WHO IS THINKING ABOUT THE BEST TIME TO HAVE CHILDREN

Zara has been working for several years in an office-based role, and has progressed quickly within her organisation. She would like to start planning a family in the near future, but her experiences in the industry have made her wary about discussing this with her employer, and she worries that having a family would appear as if she doesn't have a commitment to her role. This is frustrating, because her career has been going so well, and she is on track to move into a senior role in three-to-five years' time. Becoming a father hasn't been an issue for any of the men she works with. All of the feedback she has had, though, for many years is that if she gets pregnant it will stifle her career.



*"...what I worry about is if I took my foot off the gas, and I went off for nine months, six weeks whatever... Someone would fill my position... Or, I will miss something key and I'd struggle to get back to where I was..."*  
*"...my friends, even the people I have worked with, that I have talked to, there is this kind of expectation that you can't have both, that actually if you are going to have a baby or start a family, you're going to have to leave..."*

#### Key questions:

- How can Zara's employer support her?
- How can other organisations support her?
- Who/what organisations could support her employer?

#### What would be helpful for Zara and her employer?

- Open discussion about her plans to help understand what her options are.
- An understanding of the support mechanisms available.
- The ability for Zara to discuss these issues openly with her employer.
- More senior women with children as role models (in this and other organisations).

# SOLUTIONS & NEXT STEPS

During data collection, participants were asked to suggest any solutions that they felt would contribute to mitigating both practical barriers for working mothers as well as less tangible (sometimes attitudinal) ones. These were collated and developed into a series of recommended 'next steps' for the industry in discussion with key stakeholders. They range from relatively 'quick fixes' (aimed at Q1 of 2021) through more medium-term initiatives (by the end of 2021) to longer-term work that will require deeper cultural change. These are summarised in the following table.

## SHORT-TERM ACTIVITIES

DEVELOPING ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS	
<p><b>Develop a 'Working Mothers' webpage on the Women in Racing (WiR) website, which can be shared with stakeholders, to include (but not be limited to) existing material and to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share guidelines (e.g. about legal requirements and signposting), with practical steps for employers and employees in different workplace contexts (small/large, non-/office-based, rural/urban)</li> <li>• Communicate existing advice and guidance available – e.g. from NARS, Racing Welfare, WiR, so that <i>"the door is always open"</i></li> <li>• Circulate toolkits/links on entitlements via existing social media networks (or build new ones, e.g. through Facebook and Instagram)</li> <li>• Publish and distribute handbooks with policy, rights and entitlements, to be made freely available and well advertised (and where possible use existing ones such as the BHA handbook).</li> </ul>	<p>A short-term activity led by Women in Racing supported by Simply Racing</p>
COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH	
<p><b>Develop 'Racing Home' research findings and build on these</b>, to encourage more open discussion about pregnancy, maternity and family life, feeding into the development of both formal and informal solutions.</p>	<p>Women in Racing and Oxford Brookes University, in the first part of 2021</p>
<p><b>Build on existing informal childcare arrangements</b> with a 'networking' structure ('Mumsnet' for racing?), for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing news and tips about childcare, breaking down isolation, coffee chats (this could be online and face-to-face).</li> <li>• Feeding into a champions' network as this develops.</li> </ul>	<p>NARS and Racing Welfare</p>
PROMOTION AND AWARENESS-RAISING	
<p><b>Share examples of positive role models</b> who balance career and family and are willing to openly share their challenges and show what can be achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a campaign (provisionally #FindingTheBalance) around mothers with successful careers in racing (and be specific to the different areas of horseracing), fathers who share parenting, etc.</li> <li>• Share stories of successful career transitions and types to encourage flexibility of roles.</li> <li>• Educate young men as well as women in the racing schools and academies and via BHA and TRIC courses through dialogue and curricular activity.</li> <li>• Designate a licensing "motherhood" kitemark through the BHA and NTF modules.</li> </ul>	<p>A short-term activity for Women in Racing and Simply Racing</p>

<p><b>A poster campaign</b> to provide guidance and context-sensitive information (for display in bathrooms, changing rooms, staff rooms, kitchens and canteens).</p>	<p>NARS, Racing Welfare and racecourses</p>
<b>CHILDCARE AND SUPPORT</b>	
<p><b>Develop a 'buddy' scheme</b> where women have another mother as mentor (i.e. someone with experience of pregnancy and returning to work) – online or face-to-face and confidential.</p>	<p>A shorter-term WiR initiative</p>
<b>MEDIUM-TERM ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>DEVELOPING ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS</b>	
<p><b>Develop a 'Working mothers' toolkit</b>, drawing on industry expertise for distribution to all training providers and trainees, which will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share good employment practice, including examples from different workplace contexts (e.g. office-based, yard) and job roles (managerial, stable staff). These might include return-to-work policies or ways to introduce flexible working.</li> <li>• Demonstrate to employers the benefits of the 'longer-term' business case for supporting women</li> <li>• Develop and share posters and promotional material that support career aspirations and encourage women to seek career reviews and/or advice</li> <li>• Explore ways of supporting women on their return to work, including 'graduated routes'.</li> <li>• Explore appropriate types of flexibility – working times, homeworking, job-share, etc. and develop accompanying guidelines</li> <li>• Explore what has been learned during the COVID-19 relating to flexible working, and other working patterns/locations</li> <li>• Foster a more nurturing approach to pregnancy and maternity; recognising its impact (e.g. keeping-in-touch days, gradual return, etc.) while reducing stigma and guilt (i.e. everybody has different support needs)</li> <li>• Sharing what educational opportunities are available for career advancement.</li> </ul>	<p>A medium-term activity led by Women in Racing and Simply Racing</p>
<b>COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH</b>	
<p><b>Maintain existing work and develop new initiatives to engage with women</b>, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing and developing new areas for outreach, eg, with rural yards.</li> <li>• Setting up mother and baby groups for racing staff at hubs, beginning with activities such as coffee morning discussions (both online and face-to-face)</li> <li>• Developing a network of regional champions (women and men).</li> </ul>	<p>NARS and Racing Welfare, building on existing work and also developing medium-term projects</p>

## PROMOTION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

**A series of promotion and awareness-raising initiatives and events**, for example:

- Building on Community Day (9th May) or the Southwell celebration of International Women's Day (8th March 2020) with 'Women in Racing Day'.

A medium- to long-term initiative to be led by the BHA/Diversity in Racing Steering Group (DiRSG) (subject to COVID-19 restrictions)

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**Mentoring to build confidence in women and girls.** This will build confidence, and the likelihood they will seek support and advice.

- Adding a specific maternity mentoring arm added to the WiR Programme, open to the industry with specialist mentors.

A medium-term solution for WiR to develop existing mentoring support

## LONGER-TERM WORK

### DEVELOPING ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

- **Develop a hotline** to inform employees and employers about rights and entitlements, as well as informal forms of support.
- **Create a horseracing Participants Advice Bureau on the lines of the Citizens Advice.**
- **Raise awareness about the changing physical needs/abilities of women** which can be very individual and vary with job role.
- **Rehabilitation and racing centres to develop mental and physical support programmes for returning mother.**

Longer-term projects to involve NARS, Oaksey House, Jack Berry House, Peter O'Sullivan House, The Racing Centre, and Racing Welfare

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

**Developing longer-term career strategies within the industry**, which might involve increasing awareness around transferability of experience to other roles in racing and creating the necessary pathways that allow staff to stay in the industry.

A longer-term initiative run by BHA Careers In Racing /CATS/JETS<sup>45</sup>

## CHILDCARE AND SUPPORT

**Conduct a review of childcare at the hubs**, enabling those who use it to design solutions and meet the need for more flexible and affordable childcare in these locations.

A longer-term initiative for NARS, NTF and the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (TBA)

**Review methods for introducing a mechanism of pooled funding to cover maternity leave for self-employed women.** This would begin to address seriously the issue of women jockeys and other self-employed women in terms of their right to family life.

An initiative to be discussed with BHA, TBA, PJA, NTF and NARS

<sup>45</sup> Respectively, the Careers Advice and Training Service <https://racingwelfare.co.uk/cats-careers-advice-training-service/> and the Jockeys Education and Training Scheme <http://www.jets-uk.org/>



## FACILITATING CULTURAL CHANGE

<p><b>Explore potential for greater access to HR advice and facilities</b> (e.g. through a centralised HR function), meeting a need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build information about pregnancy, maternity, paternity and childcare into training packages throughout the talent pipeline. This should address all those entering the industry – including both young women and men – through to trainers and other employers. It would engage the racing colleges and all who are involved with education at any level, using existing avenues and developing new ones</li> <li>• Address the lack of reviews and appraisals (where this is the case), encouraging active dialogue with employers</li> <li>• Provide employers who do not have HR support in place with appropriate support (dependent on their size).</li> </ul>	<p>Industry stakeholders to implement</p>
<p><b>Sharing and embedding good practice around family life</b> to ‘mainstream’ this across the industry’s processes, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing certification/awards for diversity across employers, and CPD/kitemark for the industry, working alongside and, where appropriate, within existing ones (integrating these, for example, into the BHA industry licensing standards as well as best-practice awards such as the Lycett Team Champion Awards).</li> <li>• Harnessing opportunities for assessment and CPD where this does not currently happen, making some modules mandatory and introducing accreditation that is also recognised outside of the industry, e.g. with the Chartered Management Institute.</li> </ul>	<p>Industry stakeholders to implement</p>
<p><b>Understanding and acknowledging the rigidity of some constraints</b> (e.g. timings for gallops, shift patterns) ensuring that solutions are developed that are sensitive to the needs of particular industry roles and functions.</p>	<p>Industry stakeholders to implement</p>
<p><b>Conduct a review of possibilities around part-time and flexible work and job-sharing.</b> This would benefit from <b>a Pilot Scheme</b> in one or more yards to explore the issues and develop good practice that can be shared and used as an industry template.</p>	<p>Run by NTF, NARS and Racing Foundation</p>

Finally, this study has built on the primarily quantitative work of Oxford Brookes University for Women in Racing’s 2017 study. That work identified a need for greater support for women during pregnancy and maternity, in addition to dealing with family life and caring responsibilities more generally. This subsequent qualitative study has enabled us to develop a much deeper understanding of what is needed through a rich set of data, for which we engaged with close to 120 individuals. As well as collecting opinions based on lived experience, we were also able to collate good practice for employers and wide-ranging suggestions for solutions. We look forward to seeing the industry take up the challenge and work together to move forward.

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# APPENDIX 1 - THE TEAM

## DR. KATE CLAYTON-HATHWAY

Kate Clayton-Hathway is a Research Fellow with the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes Business School. She led on the 2017 diversity project for the horseracing industry, and has many years' experience as a qualitative researcher specialising in interviews, focus groups and developing analytical frameworks. Her specialism is in gender equality within organisational structures, and she is particularly interested in promoting progressive institutional change. Kate is also an activist, focusing mainly on women's rights, supports a community charity in Oxfordshire with its project monitoring and evaluation, was a founder member of Oxford Fawcett and a community outreach coordinator for Oxford International Women's Festival.



## DR. BIANCA STUMBITZ

Bianca Stumbitz's research interests include gender and work-life balance issues, as well as working conditions more broadly. She has specialist knowledge on the subject of maternity/paternity workplace policies and practices across the world. Bianca has particular experience in exploring family-friendly and other maternity protection issues at work within their specific policy and cultural context, and in examining the feasibility of innovative workplace maternity supports at low cost. Funders of her work have included the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the European Commission. As part of her work, she has been advising multiple stakeholders, including employers, trade unions, government departments, international organisations and NGOs. She leads Middlesex University Gender & Diversity Research Cluster and the International Committee of the US-based Work and Family Researchers Network, and is a member of the Maternity Protection Committee of the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.



## TALLULAH LEWIS

Tallulah Lewis is the third and current Chair of Women in Racing, following Founder and Honorary President Sally Rowley-Williams and Julie Deadman, and has been a member of the organisation since 2014. Tallulah leads the committee of nine women who work across all sectors of the industry covering racecourse management, legal, regulatory, and communications-based roles, as well as roles directly representing racing's people and caring for the sport's horses. She has experience in a number of industry sectors, including working for the Southern Hemisphere publication ANZ Bloodstock News, the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association (where she established their next-generation offering 'The Thoroughbred Club') and Weatherbys. Tallulah is currently working for the UK Tote Group as their International Development Manager, focused on expanding the business globally and gaining experience in international markets.





## DENA MERSON

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Dena Merson is the founder of specialist horseracing consultancy Simply Racing, and has extensive experience in coaching and mentoring in the racing industry. She devised and developed the WiR mentoring programme and works with leaders across the sport. Her work with women focuses on furthering their careers, and developing the self-confidence and skills that will enable them to achieve their business objectives and thrive in senior management positions.

A Cambridge graduate and former Managing Director at Credit Suisse, Dena has been an owner/ breeder and sat on various boards before creating an executive coaching business, specialising in leadership, individual development and transition. Dena blends a keen understanding of horseracing politics with business expertise, working with individuals and organisations on managing change and helping people reach their potential.



[www.simplyracing.uk](http://www.simplyracing.uk) [www.adlibitum.uk.com](http://www.adlibitum.uk.com)

## MICHAEL ARMSTRONG

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Michael Armstrong is Marketing, Communications and Events Consultant for Simply Racing. Michael runs Parade Ring Marketing, his own digital marketing and social media management company. Following his graduation from university, he took a place on the highly regarded British Horseracing Graduate Development Programme where he worked for the British Horseracing Authority. He then moved into racecourse marketing and sponsorship where he gained experience in managing the delivery of brand sponsorship contracts. Today, he works directly with and on behalf of businesses and public services in order to help develop, improve, maintain and manage their marketing, communications and public relations.



## APPENDIX 2 – METHODOLOGY

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A qualitative approach was taken, providing rich data sources and allowing complex analysis of stakeholder perceptions. The initial themes for exploration of motherhood in horseracing emerged during discussions in open industry forums. These fed into discussions between the project team of Oxford Brookes University and Simply Racing to develop a set of overarching questions. A literature review was undertaken to provide further background and context, which aided the development of research instruments for data collection.

Eight discussion workshops on the role of motherhood in the industry were carried out between early March and early May 2020, with the initial two as face-to-face meetings. Following the introduction of restrictions for groups of individuals to assemble due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a further six workshops were moved online using a Zoom platform. The workshop invitations were disseminated through a range of media including email from the project team and social media.

Themes surrounding the role of motherhood in the industry were further investigated through one-to-one, semi-structured telephone and video-link interviews with key industry stakeholders who had been invited to interview by members of the project steering group. These took place between April and October 2020. Video-link and telephone interviews were chosen from the outset to give greater flexibility for the participants. This is especially useful when research participants are in very senior roles, with many demands on their time, and may need to reschedule an interview at short notice.

The interviews were analysed with the aid of QSR Nvivo (v.12), which was used for data management and topic coding and this helped to make sense of a rich dataset. Men and women were asked to take part in both aspects of the research to obtain the widest possible range of perspectives. A thematic approach was adopted for the qualitative data analysis, which reflected a) themes that had recurred in previous discussions within the industry, including a symposium on motherhood, b) the topics identified in the preceding literature review (which influenced the questions asked during interviews), and c) themes identified inductively from systematic (re-)reading of data, followed by discussion and interpretation within the research team.

This research was potentially sensitive since it involved participants sharing their personal stories and viewpoints, in addition to contact with a number of key individuals from the horseracing industry who may be easily identifiable. Thus, considerations about research ethics were taken into account throughout the different stages of the research process in order to ensure that the work was carried out to the highest ethical standards. In particular, all steps were taken and the report has been written in a way which ensures no participants are identifiable. Those taking part were provided with information about the purpose of this study, research ethics and confidentiality, as well as a link to the Oxford Brookes University Research Ethics Committee which had approved this research.

## APPENDIX 3 – RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

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### **Women in Racing / Simply Racing – ‘Racing Home’: exploring the challenges working mothers face in the British horseracing industry**

#### **Workshop topic guide**

##### **Introduction**

Workshop process and rules; consent and anonymity and demonstrate how ‘data’ will be collected for transparency purposes

##### **Workshop discussions – key questions**

**What is it like being a working mother in the industry? (ie, practical challenges; other challenges, emotional or otherwise?)**

**Can you describe any challenges you have faced around pregnancy and maternity leave? (ie, biggest challenges you faced? What was most helpful?)**

**What are the options for childcare?**

**Have you been able to freely discuss your pregnancy/maternity/childcare needs with your employer or manager?**

**Can you describe any ways you have had to manage perceptions of being a working mother with management and colleagues?**

**Can you describe ways that your career development/progression has been shaped by pregnancy, maternity, caring responsibilities?**

**What options exist for you to find out about your entitlements and rights, eg statutory maternity pay?**

**How would you describe your work-life balance?**

**What structures and practices need to be in place in your specific workplace to get the best out of people and support them fully?**

**Who is well placed to bring about any changes that are needed?**

## CONSENT FORM – Online workshop discussions

**‘Racing Home’:** exploring the challenges working mothers face in the British horseracing industry

### Name, position and contact details of Researcher:

Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway  
Research Fellow, Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice  
Oxford Brookes Business School  
Gipsy Lane Campus  
Oxford, OX3 0BP

[Kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:Kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk)

07767 251425

	<b>Please initial box</b>	
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study, including the statement about the legal limitations to data confidentiality, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. I agree to take part in the above study.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>Please initial box</b>	
	Yes	No
4. I agree to the use of anonymised workshop outputs in publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

Kate Clayton-Hathway

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway (researcher)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**



**Workshops - participant information**

**Introduction** - The 'Racing Home' project was launched in November 2019. It aims to explore the challenges facing working mothers in the British horseracing industry. It will be carried out on behalf of Women in Racing (WiR), by a team from Simply Racing, a consultancy specialising in working with the UK horseracing industry, and the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, Oxford Brookes University. We are now launching a set of workshops for individuals to feed back on their experiences of motherhood in the industry. These aim to raise awareness of the issues by sharing experiences and offering a forum for discussion. This can ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the decisions working women need to make, how this affects their careers, work-life balance, etc. The workshops will be organised and facilitated by Simply Racing, with research support from Oxford Brookes.

**Deciding whether to take part** - The workshops will be carried out at a number of locations to suit those working in the industry (ie, Kelso, Southwell, Newmarket, Lambourne, Pontefract and Ascot) and take 3 hours (which includes time for refreshments). They will be used to carry out small discussion groups and allow participants to share their knowledge and experiences of working in the industry whilst pregnant, on maternity leave and/or carrying out caring responsibilities. These would include several areas that could vary according to the experience of people in the room on the day. The sessions will encourage reflective thought around areas of good practice, and help identify potential for improvement. During the workshops a researcher from Oxford Brookes will keep a written note of all of the issues raised. No one will be identified in the comments recorded.

**What next?** - If you decide to take part, we should be grateful if you could please sign the consent form and return it to us at the beginning of the workshop. Participation in this research is voluntary, and it is up to individuals to decide whether to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The only cost to you for taking part in the study will be your time.

**What is going to be the outcome of this research?** - Information collected from the workshops will help us identify the experiences of mothers in the industry, challenges they face, areas of good practice and potential solutions for employers. The findings will be presented in a report that will be circulated throughout the horseracing industry through Women in Racing and the Diversity in Racing Steering Group to help employers and key industry stakeholders develop good practice. No individual cases or participants will be identifiable.

**Confidentiality and Ethics** - All the information that you give us will be kept strictly confidential and your name will be substituted with an anonymous code in any records that we keep. The only people who will have access to the records are the members of the Oxford Brookes research team. While the research is in progress, the records will be stored securely in the researchers' computers and they will be accessible by password. Anything that is written for publication, once the project is completed, will protect the names and the privacy of the individuals involved. No specific reference will be made to individual organisations, and other identifying features, such as individual's personal circumstances will be anonymised.

We have a duty to point out that there are some legal limitations to data confidentiality and that in some exceptional situations it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

If, following the workshop, you have any concerns arising from the issues discussed, confidential support on a range of issues is available from Racing Welfare (<https://racingwelfare.co.uk/services/racings-support-line/>) and the National Association of Racing Staff <https://www.naors.co.uk/>.

The University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University, has approved the research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on [ethics@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@brookes.ac.uk)

**Privacy notice** - Oxford Brookes University (OBU) will be the Data Controller of any data that you supply for this research. This means that they are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. They will make the decisions on how your data is used and for what reasons. You can contact the University's Information Management Team on 01865 485420 or email [info.sec@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:info.sec@brookes.ac.uk).

OBU's legal basis for collecting this data is:

- You are consenting to providing it to us; and / or,
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest such as research.

#### **Privacy of data**

*What type of data will Oxford Brookes University use?* Notes taken during the group workshops will be used to produce a themed analysis.

*Who will OBU share your data with?* A summary of the themes arising from your anonymised data will be shared with our project partners. The data itself will remain with Oxford Brookes University.

*Will OBU transfer my data outside of the UK?* No

*What rights do I have regarding my data that OBU holds?*

- You have the right to be informed about what data will be collected and how this will be used
- You have the right of access to your data
- You have the right to correct data if it is wrong
- You have the right to ask for your data to be deleted up until the point the project report is published.
- You have the right to restrict use of the data we hold about you
- You have the right to data portability
- You have the right to object to the university using your data
- You have rights in relation to using your data automated decision making and profiling.

*Where did OBU source my data?* Group workshop participation

*Are there any consequences of not providing the requested data?* There are no legal consequences of not providing data for this research. It is purely voluntary.

*Will there be any automated decision making using my data?* There will be no use of automated decision making in scope of UK Data Protection and Privacy legislation.

*How long will OBU keep your data?* Once the research is completed the electronic files and a paper record will be kept in a secure place in the principal investigator department. These will be kept for a period of ten years and then they will be destroyed.

*Who can I contact if I have concerns?* You can contact the Information Management team. Postal Address: Information Management Team, IT Services, Room 2.12, Gibbs Building, Headington Campus, Gypsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP. Email: [info.sec@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:info.sec@brookes.ac.uk) | Tel: 01865 485420 in UK | +44 1865 485420 outside the UK.

**Further Information** - If you have any query about any aspect of the project, please do not hesitate to contact us: Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway, Project Leader: [kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk), tel. 01865 485796

**Online workshops - participant information**

**Introduction** - The ‘Racing Home’ project was launched in November 2019. It aims to explore the challenges facing working mothers in the British horseracing industry. It will be carried out on behalf of Women in Racing (WiR), by a team from Simply Racing, a consultancy specialising in working with the UK horseracing industry, and the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, Oxford Brookes University. We are now launching a set of online workshops for individuals to feed back on their experiences of motherhood in the industry. These aim to raise awareness of the issues by sharing experiences and offering a forum for discussion. This can ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the decisions working women need to make, how this affects their careers, work-life balance, etc. The workshops will be organised and facilitated by Simply Racing, with research support from Oxford Brookes.

**Deciding whether to take part** - The workshops will be carried out online via [platform to be agreed following testing] and take 2 hours. They will be used to carry out a group discussion and allow participants to share their knowledge and experiences of working in the industry whilst pregnant, on maternity leave and/or carrying out caring responsibilities. These would include several areas that could vary according to the experience of people in the session on the day. The sessions will encourage reflective thought around areas of good practice, and help identify potential for improvement. During the workshops, a researcher from Oxford Brookes will keep a written note of all of the issues raised. No one will be identified in the comments recorded.

**What next?** - If you decide to take part, we should be grateful if you could please print, sign and scan the consent form and return it to the research team via [kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk). If you are unable to print and scan the form, please email [kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk), to confirm that you have read the consent form and that you agree to the points listed. During the workshop, the data collection process will be fully explained and you will be asked to consent verbally. Participation in this research is voluntary, and it is up to individuals to decide whether to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The only cost to you for taking part in the study will be your time.

**What is going to be the outcome of this research?** - Information collected from the workshops will help us identify the experiences of mothers in the industry, challenges they face, areas of good practice and potential solutions for employers. The findings will be presented in a report and circulated throughout the horseracing industry through Women in Racing and the Diversity in Racing Steering Group to help employers and key industry stakeholders develop good practice. No individual cases or participants will be identifiable.

**Confidentiality and Ethics** - All the information that you give us will be kept strictly confidential and participant names will be substituted with an anonymous code in any records that we keep. The only people who will have access to the records are the members of the Oxford Brookes research team. While the research is in progress, the records will be stored securely in the researchers’ computers and they will be accessible by password. Anything that is written for publication, once the project is completed, will protect the names and the privacy of the individuals involved. No specific reference will be made to individual organisations, and other identifying features, such as individual’s personal circumstances will be anonymised.

We have a duty to point out that there are some legal limitations to data confidentiality and that in some exceptional situations it is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

If, following the workshop, you have any concerns arising from the issues discussed, confidential support on a range of issues is available from Racing Welfare (<https://racingwelfare.co.uk/services/racings-support-line/>) and the National Association of Racing Staff <https://www.naors.co.uk/>.

The University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University, has approved the research. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, you should contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee on [ethics@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@brookes.ac.uk)

**Privacy notice** - Oxford Brookes University (OBU) will be the Data Controller of any data that you supply for this research. This means that they are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. They will make the decisions on how your data is used and for what reasons. You can contact the University's Information Management Team on 01865 485420 or email [info.sec@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:info.sec@brookes.ac.uk).

OBU's legal basis for collecting this data is:

- You are consenting to providing it to us; and / or,
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest such as research.

### **Privacy of data**

*What type of data will Oxford Brookes University use?* Notes taken during the group online workshops will be used to produce a themed analysis.

*Who will OBU share your data with?* A summary of the themes arising from your anonymised data will be shared with our project partners. The data itself will remain with Oxford Brookes University.

*Will OBU transfer my data outside of the UK?* No

*What rights do I have regarding my data that OBU holds?*

- You have the right to be informed about what data will be collected and how this will be used
- You have the right of access to your data
- You have the right to correct data if it is wrong
- You have the right to ask for your data to be deleted up until the point the project report is published.
- You have the right to restrict use of the data we hold about you
- You have the right to data portability
- You have the right to object to the university using your data
- You have rights in relation to using your data automated decision making and profiling.

*Where did OBU source my data?* Group online workshop participation

*Are there any consequences of not providing the requested data?* There are no legal consequences of not providing data for this research. It is purely voluntary.

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**Further Information** - If you have any query about any aspect of the project, please do not hesitate to contact us: Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway, Project Leader: [kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk), tel. 07767 251425



## Stakeholder interviews: interview topic guide

### Women in Racing

#### 'Racing Home': exploring the challenges working mothers face in the British horseracing industry

- 1 **Background:** Please tell me briefly about your own background and organisation(s) you have worked for or been involved with within horseracing.
- 2 What do you think are the challenges women face around pregnancy, maternity leave or caring responsibilities?
- 3 In your experience, are there any areas around caring where career development/progression for women might be constrained by pregnancy, maternity, or caring responsibilities?
- 4 Do you think that women are able to discuss their pregnancy/maternity/childcare needs freely with their colleagues, employer or manager?
- 5 Have you seen any change(s) in the opportunities women have to be working mothers, during your time in the industry (in your own area)? Do you think there has been positive progress? What evidence do you see for this?
- 6 What structures and practices around caring responsibilities do you think need to be in place to get the best out of people and support them fully?
- 7 Who is well placed to bring about any changes that are needed?
- 8 Do you have any further questions or comments?

## CONSENT FORM – Stakeholder interviews

### ‘Racing Home’: exploring the challenges working mothers face in the British horseracing industry

#### Name, position and contact details of Researcher:

Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway  
Research Fellow, Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice  
Oxford Brookes Business School  
Gipsy Lane Campus  
Oxford, OX3 0BP

[Kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:Kclayton-hathway@brookes.ac.uk)  
07767 251425

#### Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study, including the statement about the legal limitations to data confidentiality, and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.
3. I agree to take part in the above study.
4. I agree/do not agree to the interview being recorded (delete as appropriate)

☐
☐
☐
☐

#### Please initial box

5. I agree to the use of de-identified quotations in publications

Yes

No

☐
☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr Kate Clayton-Hathway (researcher)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

## **‘Racing Home’: exploring the challenges working mothers face in the British horseracing industry**

### **Stakeholder interviews - participant information**

#### **Introduction**

The ‘Racing Home’ project was launched in November 2019. It aims to explore the challenges facing working mothers in the British horseracing industry. It will be carried out on behalf of Women in Racing (WiR), by a team from Simply Racing, a consultancy specialising in working with the UK horseracing industry, and the Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice, Oxford Brookes University.

We are conducting a set of workshops (face-to-face and online) for individuals to feed back on their experiences of motherhood in the industry. These will be used to carry out discussion groups and allow participants to discuss barriers and enablers to working in the industry whilst pregnant, on maternity leave and/or carrying out caring responsibilities. In addition, we will interview 5-6 industry stakeholders representing different aspects of the sector. This will enable us in identifying the issues from a strategic/employer perspective.

The interviews will be organised and carried out by Oxford Brookes.

#### **Deciding whether to take part**

The interviews would be conducted by phone or video call, and at a time to suit you. They should last 30-45 minutes, and we would send the questions in advance. The discussion will cover challenges, in addition to areas of good practice, and potential for improvement.

#### **What next?**

If you decide to take part, we would like to set up a one-to-one telephone interview with you at a mutually convenient time. We will send you a consent form so that you can confirm that you are happy to take part in this project. We should be grateful if you could please sign it and return it to us. If you agree, we would like to record the interview, to avoid having to write notes throughout (your express permission about this will be sought in the consent form).

After the interview, we would send a transcript of your interview for you to read and confirm that you are happy for the data from your interview to be included in this study. Once the data has been analysed, we will send you the section the report containing any quotations, to ensure that you are happy for these to be included. Note that all data included in the report will be de-identified, to ensure that you are not recognizable. You may withdraw from the study at any time up until this draft report is agreed. If you decide to withdraw from the study, you do not need to give any reasons. The only cost to you for taking part in the study will be your time.

#### **What is going to be the outcome of this research?**

The information we collect from these interviews will be combined from that in the workshops to help us identify the experiences of mothers in the industry, challenges they face, areas of good practice and potential solutions. The findings will be presented in a report that will be circulated throughout the horseracing industry through Women in Racing and the Diversity in Racing Steering Group. Its aim is to help employers and key industry stakeholders develop good practice. No individual cases or participants will be identifiable.

#### **Confidentiality and Ethics**

All the information that you give us will be kept strictly confidential and your name will be substituted with an anonymous code in any records that we keep. The only people who will have access to the records are the members of the Oxford Brookes research team. While the research is in progress, the audio and typed records will be stored securely in the researchers’ computers and they will be accessible by password.

Anything that is written for publication, once the project is completed, will protect the names and the privacy of the individuals involved. In order to protect confidentiality no specific reference will be made to individual organisations, and other identifying features, such as individual's personal circumstances will be anonymised.

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- Processing is necessary for the performance of a task in the public interest such as research.

### **Privacy of data**

*What type of data will Oxford Brookes University use?* Transcripts from audio recordings will be used to produce a themed analysis.

*Who will OBU share your data with?* A summary of the themes arising from the de-identified interview data will be shared with our project partners. The audio recordings and transcripts will remain with Oxford Brookes University.

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*What rights do I have regarding my data that OBU holds?*

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- You have the right to data portability
- You have the right to object to the university using your data
- You have rights in relation to using your data automated decision making and profiling.

*Where did OBU source my data?* Telephone interview discussions

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*Will there be any automated decision making using my data?* There will be no use of automated decision making in scope of UK Data Protection and Privacy legislation.

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